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# The PASSING SHOW

2D.

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S. P. B. MAIS
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4 Pages of LAUGHTER

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*THE PASSING SHOW*

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# The Woman on DEER RIVER

SHE came into the country from God alone knew where, early one summer, with all her worldly goods packed on her led horse. It and the one she rode were sturdy, small creatures whose stocky build and rough hair spoke mutely of Mongolian ancestry when the world was young and monsters strode the mainland between unnamed Asia and America.

She was tall and slim like a willow, and she bent with her pony's movement as a willow bends in wind. She had blue eyes beneath black lashes that were a sinful snare, and straight black brows above them. She had skin too white for any woman of the North Woods, and she had hair the colour of sunshine on ripe wheat.

As she rode north with the warm weather she would have had a string of men behind her, river-men farther down, woodsmen, and, finally, trappers that she passed on lonely streams, had she not carried an excellent rifle easy to her hand and told them not to follow.

She was not like a woman when she looked straight into their eyes and told them that, quiet and soft in her low voice, for all her amazing beauty, but rather like some hard man who has been tempered by experience.

No one mistook her meaning or doubted her power to enforce her will; and so she went in peace to find her place of destiny.

This turned out to be Deer River, and the trading post of old Peter McPherson on its western bank. A likely place was McPherson's, set in good trapping country, since it was so far in the hinterlands. It was none so big, being but the store itself with the usual living quarters at the rear, a tiny wharf running out in the edge of the stream which was so calm in summer, so terrible in freshet of spring, so sullen with ice in the time of the long snows, and some five or six cabins set in a circle around. But the store was full of goods brought up by *voyageurs* in their canoes from the lone ends of civilisation far below, to be traded to the Indians and white trappers for their furs.

The woman rode up along the pebbly stretch beside the river in one flaming sunset and there was a smile upon her face, a deep smile of satisfaction.

"This," she said to the soul within her, "is World's End for me."

It took her three days to talk McPherson into selling to her, lock-stock-and-barrel, for more money than he had ever dreamed of seeing in his life.

And so the world of McPherson's knew, slowly as things travel in the hinterlands, that there was a new trader at the post, and that it was a woman—a woman so astonishingly beautiful that she was worth a ten days' trip to see. They came to see her, this man and that, from distant stream and flat and pot-hole country, and traded with her diffidently that they might prove these high tales.

They proved them, every one, for she exuded beauty from every smile and glance of her dark blue eyes, every movement of her body, slow moving but cat-quick under its slowness. They all knew that—knew that she could leap like a panther, as fast and far, if need be. They felt the quality of the panther beneath her courteous demeanour.

For she was polite to all, low voiced, smiling.

The Indians took to her at once for that very thing. Her low voice, her waiting as they waited for this word and that in the trading.

She never hurried them. Her manners were their manners, and she never grinned over their heads to anyone.

She did not change the name of the post, and it was months before anyone knew hers. Then the snows came and Pierre Dorien and France LeFaver, who had gone down the river by canoe with her bales of furs and came back by dog train with new goods stacked high, bore the papers of the trans-action with her name upon them, and it was as lovely as herself.

Sandra, it was, Sandra Llewellan, on the soiled bills, in pencil:

So the small world knew her for Ma'amselle Sandra, but it was Ma'amselle mostly, for they regarded her with a certain awe.

And life began to be very good for Ma'amselle Sandra.

Dorien and LeFaver were her standbys, as they had been McPherson's, doing such work as was necessary about the place, paid as McPherson had paid them and perhaps a trifle more, since Ma'amselle was not Scotch. They both lived the year round at the post, each in his cabin with his wife and children. Dorien's wife was French, but LeFaver had married an Indian girl and loved her with all his heart.

His children were dusky, shy-eyed things, and they watched the woman with the sunshiny hair with round black eyes, fingers in mouths.

And Ma'amselle smiled at them, for they intrigued her vastly with their cross of blood, their uncertain destiny.

Marie Dorien did not like Ma'amselle, and showed it at every turn.

She was afraid of her, not physically, but because of her blazing beauty, her uncommon charm. Pierre was a good husband, a good father, but he was a man. And this Ma'amselle Sandra was a torch to the tinder of any man. So Marie frowned when her name was mentioned and smiled a small secret smile—the same that one woman has used to damn another with since time was.

She had need of it, for Dorien would have brushed with his cheek the ground where Ma'amselle walked if by so doing he could have won from her a look that was more than friendly, so swiftly had he fallen beneath her spell.

But Ma'amselle Sandra had no eye nor ear for any man, it seemed. But they did not leave her alone.

More men tramped the snow-covered wilderness that year than the oldest trapper could remember, going and coming between their lonely cabins and McPherson's. They were for ever getting out of something they must have, either the coarse dark flour which they used for bread, or tea, or ammunition or tobacco.

The trading post did a thriving business, and every article passed through the trader's long white hands, their clear beauty under their shirt-cuffs where gold cuff-links shone, a delusion and a snare.

Used to the dark hands of Indian women, the toil hard ones of trappers' wives, these hands fascinated the men beholding even more than their owner's face. Many a one, wrapped in his blankets, beside a micmac fire, his dogs asleep beside him, his snow shoes stuck upward in the snow, dreamed long dreams of Ma'amselle's hands—laid on his unworthy cheek, held in his own, touching the oily dark hair beneath his skin cap.

But Ma'amselle was the trader, nothing more to anyone.

She knew all about Dorien. Knew it before he did. But she kept him securely in his place with her disarming unconsciousness of his feeling. She knew about Marie too, and smiled a secret smile

(*continued on next page*)

CONTINUING

# *The* WOMAN *on* DEER RIVER

herself. Marie was safe from her. She even felt a trifle sorry for her.

Men!

They were liars and double-crossers and there was no good in them. Not one in this world. Nowhere upon the earth.

Her bright lips parted at this thought, but the smile that opened them was hard as crystal, bitter as aloes.

The cold winter passed. The ice let go its grip on the frozen land. The snow melted and Deer River roared in its madness of freshet, brown and terrible with its woolly crests of foam. The dark trees of the North Woods, spruce and fir and hemlock, balsam and pine, began to take on a faint breath of lighter green where the new tips sprang, and there was a dim cloud of it along this little stream and that, maple and birch and quaking asp.

Shy flowers, nameless and sweet, bloomed amid wet mosses and all life looked up because it was spring.

And with the first warm days a stranger rode a good horse into McPherson's post. Both horse and rider were worthy of note for looks, the one tall and strong and disciplined, the other all those things as well. The horse was black and carried a well-worn saddle with the letters R.C.M.P. stamped on it. The man was lean with eyes like gimlets beneath his tilted hat-brim, and a mouth that belied them in its gentleness.

He came jogging up along the pebbly stretch where, hardly a year ago, Ma'amselle Sandra had ridden on her shaganappy, and dismounted at the wide log step.

Sandra Llewellan, coming from her living quarters into the store, saw him and stopped in her tracks, one hand reaching to the counter arrested in its motion. The breath she had just taken into her lungs stayed there. Her eyes went swiftly from blue to black.

So well she knew this trick they had that she closed them for a moment, drew a long breath, moved her hand.

When she opened her eyes they were blue again. Slowly she put her thumbs in the sides of her belt, walked forward, leaned in the wide doorway, smiling gravely.

"How do you do?" she said. "The first guest for McPherson's! Will you put up your horse? There's a shed behind the post. Hay in the loft."

"Thanks," said the man, "I will."

And he disappeared around the squat log structure.

When he returned the woman still stood in the doorway, her hands still on her hips, and this time she was smiling.

When Sandra Llewellan smiled men stopped and looked at her.

This one was no exception. He took off his hat and smiled back.

"I am Conwell, of the Mounted, Madame," he said, "and have business in the Big Woods. Headed farther north. If I may I'll tax the hospitality of the post a day or two and rest my horse. We've had a pretty tough pull up from last H.Q.'s. Still too damp for a horse. Lots of boggy places,"

"Yes," said Ma'amselle, "I know, and the tax will be gratefully paid. I've seen no one but my own people here all winter—all year since old McPherson left. I'll want to hear all the news of the outside—you have a radio, of course, at headquarters?"

"Of course. Haven't you?"

"No. It would have to be used with batteries, and there are none here. But come in and let me feed you. Isn't that a woman's first duty toward the dominant male?"

"Sure is in this case," he grinned. "I could do with food, all right."

She turned back into the store and he followed her in.

He laid his hat on the counter and was at home.

Sandra, walking beautifully in her laced boots, her trousers and her vanity of striped silk shirt, left him to his own devices and went to prepare the promised meal, but her lips were closed tight upon her teeth, the tips of her fingers were cold.

Left to himself the Mounted looked all over every inch of the place, his practised eyes missing nothing of the well-stored shelves, the bales of furs, the ordinary interior of a well-kept trading post of the fur country. He waited until she called him from the back regions where she lived, washed at a bench in the corner, brushed his rough brown hair before her tiny mirror, having to bend ridiculously to see himself, and came to the small table which had seen no guest except the occasional trappers whom she fed now and again, and smiled at her across it.

"This is an experience for me, Ma'amselle," he said. "It isn't often I meet a woman like you, much less dine with her."

"Then we should both profit," said Sandra quietly.

They took a long time to the excellent meal she had set up for him, and question and answer flew back and forth between them.

She heard that world affairs seemed on the mend, that both Canada and the United States had declared war on crime to a grim extent, and that the Duke of Kent had married his royal princess.

She drank up news of the outside world as a thirsty sponge drinks water, leaning a bit across the table, her blue eyes on his face.

And the man, looking into them, found it hard to concentrate on so prosaic a thing as news.

But the meal was done, and she must tidy her house, and he went to the cabin she had assigned him for his use. In the twilight he came back again, and they sat together on the wide log step in the cool northern spring and talked again.

A loon laughed on the river and a wolf howled far back at the west and there was a moon above the forest.

● Her left hand came away from his hip, and she leapt back, his own gun pointed at him

The woman sat with her arms around her knees and looked out to the coming darkness under the forest's roof, and her lovely face was grave as none had seen it there. Her eyes were black now with some strange excitement of the spirit.

"How far do you go to the north?" she asked presently, "and whom do you hunt—poor devil?"

"I cannot tell as to the former," he replied, holding a match to his cigarette in his cupped hands. The light showed the lean lines of his face, its strength and earnestness. "The latter—a woman."

"Oh—a—a woman," said Ma'amselle, and, after a pause, "not a nice job, I take it."

"The worst job on earth. A thousand times since last fall I have wished I had any other. But the law is the law, and women must not break it any more than men."

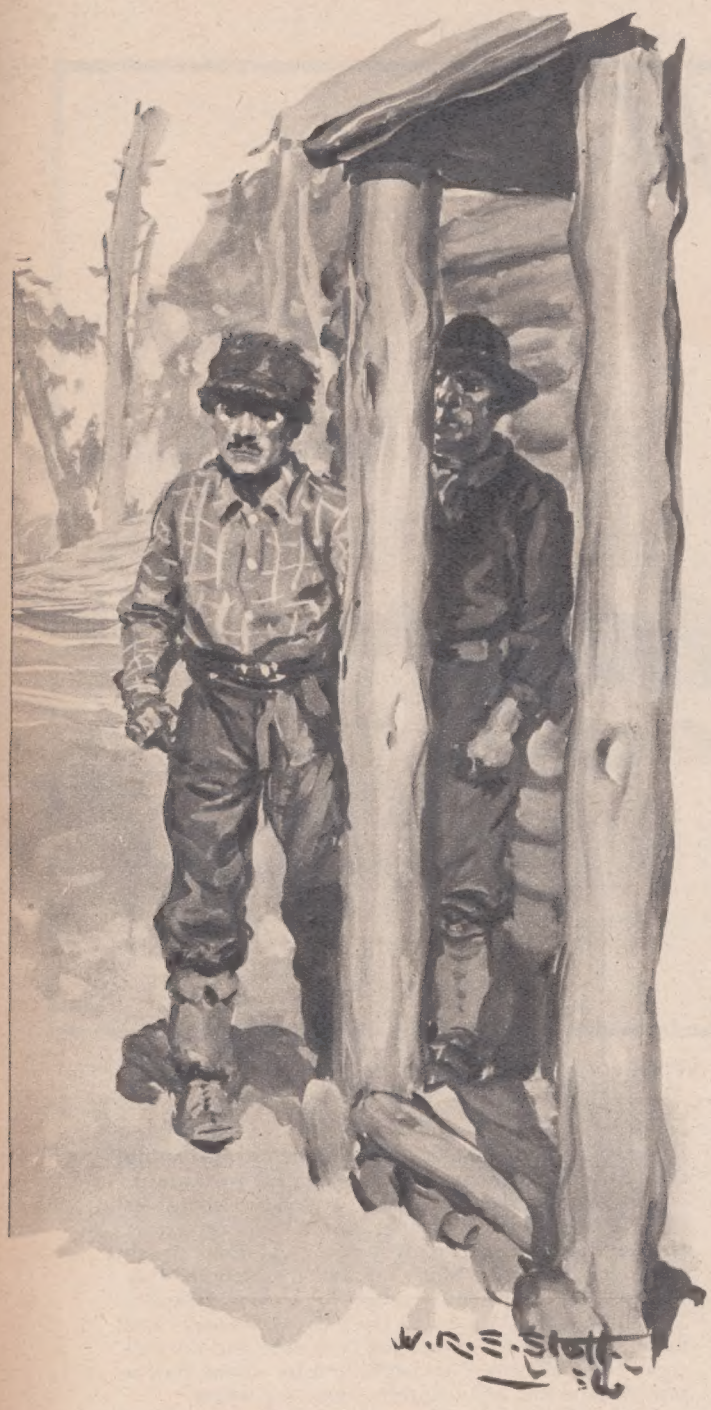
"What did she—do—this woman?" asked Ma'amselle curiously.

"She was a gunman's moll, across the line. She stuck to her man through raids and riots, through a series of robberies, through death itself when his own gang got him. She made a spectacular escape—shot her way clear, though she didn't happen to kill any one in doing it."

Ma'amselle Sandra, sitting close beside him on the step, seemed to sink curiously in upon herself at that, as if the spine in her body ran to water, and a strange whisper died on her lips. "Thanks, Mary," it seemed to breathe.

"Eh?" said the man.

"I — am glad — for that woman," she answered bravely, "death is so—so sudden and final."



Conwell smoked in silence, frowning out across the river where the shadows of the trees were dark against the moon.

"And what—what sort of woman was she?" she asked presently, "what did she look like?"

"A splendid creature, so the U.S. Service tells us, though they have no picture of her: a tall woman, handsome, dangerous, quick as a man with arms, courageous. She has a white skin and long black hair, beautiful hair. It was her pride, they say; and her eyes are black, too, an odd brilliant black that shines and sparkles like black diamonds: excitable eyes. She was never seen except on occasions calculated to engender that—driving a flying car for the gang to rob a bank, getting out of a close spot, shooting out of that last close spot when they got her man. She got away with all the loot, and we've been asked to find her—for the U.S.A."

There was a long silence while the loon laughed again, as if at some joke of its own. Then the woman moved, shivered though the night was only cool.

She looked at him sidewise under her dark lashes where the gold curls on her forehead made a blob of shadow.

"And if you find her — Conwell of the Mounted——" she said slowly, "what will you do with her?"

"Extradite her to the United States," he said, "and now I'll say good-night and thank you for a pleasant evening. I'll see you in the morning?"

"Yes. Good-night."

It was strange how friendship ripened between them through the long day following, the evening on the step again.

The man told her of his youth in Montreal, of his mother dead these seven years, of his sister and her children. He was ambitious to make a name for himself in his chosen work, had already begun to do so. The Swenson case, the Van Doldt one. If she knew the records of the R.C.M.P. she must know of them.

And she, how long had she been in the country, here on Deer river?

A year, almost. She—she—had come from across the Line—from the West—from Idaho. Yes, from Idaho.

Didn't she find it lonely with only the trappers and their wives, she who had known the outside world?

"Oh, no," she answered truthfully. Here was her life, her work, her business. She had bought the post from McPherson with cash.

"With cash?" the man cried, aghast. "You mean to tell me you brought into this country, alone, on your person, enough money to buy this trading post?"

"Sure," she said, laughing, "it was all I had—left to me by—by my father, who died—in Idaho. This was what I'd always wanted to do, so I did it."

"I see," said Conwell slowly. He turned and looked at her closely in the twilight—at her golden curls, blowing entrancingly around her head in the little winds that came up the river from the south, at the smooth brows like dusky wings above her azure eyes.

Blue eyes they were, deep and beautiful, smiling into his own. The red mouth below them was like a pomegranate, sweet to tempt a man.

But somehow he could not stoop and kiss it, as he had kissed so many.

There was something about this woman that was different, a grace, a dignity, a courage, which set her aside as a woman of parts.

He wanted rather to take her hand, to say how he admired her.

But he only looked at her while the smoke in his fingers died and the loon still laughed in the sedges.

Silly birds, the loons. They laughed at everything, life and happiness and death.

They talked late that night, and when they rose at parting, Conwell held out his hand. She laid hers in it instantly, as if some power beyond her own had drawn it there, curled her long fingers around his.

"To-morrow I shall be leaving," he said, " and I had rather say good-bye to-night."

"Oh, but I'll see you in the morning! You'll not go without another breakfast?"

"No, but that will be daylight. To-night, here in the soft dark, is the time for friends to part. I feel that we are friends. Do you?"

Ma'amselle caught a light breath across her lips, an odd little catch as if something had hurt her suddenly.

"Yes," she said, half whispering.

"Then may I stop on my down trip, providing I —am alone? I would not like you to see—to see—a prisoner, if I have one."

"Yes," she said again, a strange flood of laughter shaking her. It sounded like the loon's, hollow and mocking.

"Don't laugh, Ma'amselle," he said, "it is no laughing matter to track a woman down, no matter what she's done."

"I'm not," she said on a note that sounded like a sob, "I'm not laughing at—that—poor woman. I'm laughing, I think, at life itself, which plays such scurvy tricks! Good-night, Conwell of the Mounted. I'll see you in the morning."

The sun was high above the forest when the man brought his tall horse to the post's door. He stood bareheaded and smiled at Sandra on the step, and Dorien and LeFaver watched respectfully from one side. One of the latter's dark-skinned tots was labouring across the clearing with a bunch of wood flowers in its pudgy hands, its shy face eager. Watching Ma'amselle, its small feet stumbled, it fell sprawling, its precious posies flying, the bottle that had contained them rolling to the stranger's feet. He stooped to pick it up, but something was upon him like an avalanche—the woman reaching frantic fingers for the container in his hand.

"Give me that!" she cried, panting suddenly, "Give it to me!"

Instinctively, being an officer of the law and used to strange developments, he held it away from her, looking at it. It was so innocent a thing, merely an empty bottle which the baby had found to put its pretties in. But in that one sharp glance everything in the post had changed—the place, the atmosphere, the woman herself. Even the golden sunlight changed—to Conwell of the Mounted.

With awakened knowledge and astonishment those gimlet eyes of his went over her from head to foot. The colour had drained from her face—leaving it paper white. The dilated eyes were black as polished onyx, brilliant, sparkling. The brows above them matched them now. Only the hair—the short gold curls, blowing entrancingly in the wind again—was not in keeping. It did not belong to this white woman with the midnight eyes—and here in his hand was its simple secret.

The label bore the words Peroxide of Hydrogen.

"Ma'amselle," he said at last gently, "I guess my task is ended."

Without a sign, her eyes on his, standing almost against him, her left hand darted to his hip, came away with his own gun pointed at him as she leaped back.

"Not by a long sight!" she snapped. "Not while I'm alive! Dorien! LeFaver! I give the post to you in case I never return! Care for everything—for me! Don't let this man get hold of a horse or a canoe! I'm going!"

And she flung her long body in the law's own saddle, caught the loose rein in her free hand.

"But food, Ma'amselle!" Dorien cried, agonised. "How will you live? How will you survive? Let me bring you food!"

And with the anguish of his devouring love he caught her stirrup, raised his adoring eyes. Ma'amselle smiled with dry lips, her eyes on Conwell's face.

"The Indians will see to that," she said, "for the children I saved last winter."

"Le bon Dieu grant!" the trapper said and fell away from her horse. Her horse now. A good horse, tall and hard with muscle.

She swung him away at an instant leap—toward the north.

"Courageous," Conwell muttered to himself unconsciously, "adept with arms! A gunman's moll!"

The northern spring drowsed above the moist green forest.

Mosses sprouted on every fallen log, shy, pale flowers grew in every sheltered spot; and following the river a tall man walked, a brilliant figure in the uniform of the R.C.M.P.—a man chagrined and chastened in his pride, stern in his arraignment of himself. He carried food in plenty, since Dorien and LeFaver had supplied him, but he had neither gun, canoe nor mount.

Dorien and LeFaver were loyal to Ma'amselle.

He made for the nearest trapper's cabin, but that was a weary two days' trip. He rested an hour at midday, ate sparingly, drank of the bright river water and swung along.

At dusk he made what meagre camp he could, building a small fire for company, spreading his blanket presently to watch the stars and think.

And it was here, at dusk of that first day, that his keen ears, trained to the great silences, caught the far faint sound of horses' feet on the shingle by the stream.

He leaped up, looked that way, and stood rooted to the spot, his lips open.

His own good horse was coming at a tired fox-trot, behind it a led horse, and in its saddle the figure of a woman in a gay silk shirt, the last of the purple twilight staining to amethyst the bright gold of her hair.

Ma'amselle Sandra rode up and smiled at him.

From a holster at her hip she tossed him back his gun.

"Your prisoner, M'sieu," she said shortly. "I couldn't do it to you. It would ruin you—unarmed, afoot, outwitted—by a woman.

"You see, for the first time in many sordid years I have been a woman, only a woman, not a—a gunman's moll. This sweet life here," she looked away down Deer River in the twilight, "the trappers, the Indians, the children—they have changed me, M'sieu. And then you came, and for the first time too, I seemed to see a man as he was meant to be in the beginning—not like those whom I had known. The money that bought the post—of course it was not mine, really, though I reasoned that life should give me something since it had cheated me so pitifully. The man I stuck by—I married him at seventeen, for love. The love soon died when I knew him as he was. I had said 'for better or for worse,' and—I stuck by. That is all.

"Now take me back. But," once more she looked down the shadowed river, "the year has been worth it. It is worth it now to leave behind a—friend."

For a long time Conwell of the Mounted stood and looked at her.

Then he said, his low voice strangely deepened: "For what time must be given—and what a man can do to get it shortened I will do—you leave behind, Ma'amselle, a lover. To the end of life."

# Down Devon Way

● SUNSET AT WOOLACOMBE

THE early morning train to Barnstaple was crowded with women well encumbered with large baskets, and small children on their way to the weekly Friday market. Their conversation ran, curiously enough, on speeding.

"An' I zed to 'ur, I zed, 'Yew'm no leddy,' I zed. 'I be in tu minds whether tu report 'ee, comin' down this yurr lane like a mad thing.' 'Tis a mercy, sure 'nuff, as 'er didn' cut they legs off'n they horses, so 'twas. 'Yew'm no leddy,' I sez. That's what I sez; propper mad I was. Volks didn' ought to be allowed on roads if they can't be'ave theirselves seemin'ly."

We ran past the new aerodrome on the Taw estuary (return flights to Lundy; fifteen minutes each way; fare, fifteen shillings). The woman in the black bonnet shook her mittened fingers at that.

"An' I don't 'old wi' they vlyin'-machines neether.

"I've 'ad a 'orse bolt wi' me avore now 'cos o' them thurr. Du nobb'dy any gude, rinnin' across skies makin' a turr'ble girt un'oly noise just 'cos they's in a 'urry. 'Urryin' never landed nobb'dy nowhere to my way o' thinkin'!"

"Nor mine, Mrs. Vellacott. That be a true word as you spoke. Vlyin' is vlyin' in the veace o' Providence if you ask me. No child o' mine will ever risk 'is neck that way so long's I'm above ground."

I thought it politic not to remind her that her grandmother said as much about trains.

The narrow streets of Barnstaple were thronged with farmers in dog-carts, farmers in motor-cars, drovers driving beasts, and lorry drivers with cargoes of live stock that were as noisy as any aeroplane.

I leaned against the railings of the cattle ring and watched first a consignment of bulls, and then of cows, pass on to the weighing-machine. The scale usually stood at something over ten. "Tons?" asked my neighbour.

After being weighed they passed through a narrow railed way out, but not without paying a forfeit to the cow-puncher, if that is the right title for the kindly-looking man in an apron, who pierced a neat hole in the ear of each passing beast.

"Why does he only punch the bulls?" asked my importunate neighbour.

"'Tes Guv'ment mark," volunteered a gaitered, grey-bearded farmer with a black bowler three sizes too small for him perched over one eye.

"But why only bulls?" persisted the questioner. A little groom with a bold check coat so long that it almost covered his spindle shanks, gave corroborative evidence.

"'Tes Guv'ment mark," he repeated. An extraordinarily smart young man in neatly cut and fashionable pearl-grey lounge suit with bell-bottomed trousers, double-breasted waistcoat and long, thin-pointed, patent leather shoes, stood inside the ring. He was the kind of young man who wins prizes for professional dancing, and his occupation appeared to be that of cattle buyer. So the questioner sought elucidation of his problem from him, and repeated his question:

"Could you tell me, please, why that man punches holes in the ears of bulls only?"

The perfectly dressed young man flicked his cane against his trouser leg, guffawed and said, in excellent Hollywood: "Say, brother, you've sure said it. Jest wait a minute."

And indeed, as he spoke, an unmistakable cow allowed one of her ears to be punctured without remonstrance.

The problem was too deep for me. I left them to it. On the other side of the market a young auctioneer was standing on a thin plank above pens of pigs, half a dozen here at six weeks old, and four there at ten weeks old, and so on.

There were plenty of pushing farmers poking them, but for every twenty pokes there would be only one bid. The eager seller would stand among his pigs, and tickle them up with a stick to show their liveliness and good form, but it was the bidders, not the pigs, who lacked liveliness. I gathered the impression, which deepened as the day went on, that a Devonian and his money are not easily parted.

An elderly little shepherd with side-whiskers led a yellow-eyed, young sheepdog round on a string. We formed a smaller group round him. Bidding started at a shilling. After five minutes it stood at five shillings. A young farmer bought him for 5s. 6d., the rope thrown in.

The old shepherd walked away quickly. There were tears in his eyes. Things, I felt, must have been going pretty badly for him to have had to part with this close friend. There were no farewells: no words said. The sheepdog didn't seem to mind. The day's sale was over. The young auctioneer took out a cigarette and leaned up against one of the pig pens.

"Not much of a day," I said.

"No money about," he replied, "except for tolls. I've got to pay toll on every pig and beast, and so has the farmer. The Corporation gets it twice over, and that's not the worst. They'll come along this afternoon to pay for what they've bought by cheque, and getting the cash'll take months as like as not. There's not much profit either way."

"But these farmers all dress well, all look well fed, all look prosperous."

I pointed to two passing farmers, both wearing extremely fine golden roses in their buttonholes, both in well-cut riding breeches, and both laughing fatly at some private joke.

"You ask their banks. They're pretty well up to the limit, but they're so used to it that it doesn't worry them any more. They just get along as they can. After all, don't we all? I used to be in foreign banks. You see a lot of sailing near the wind there. It all adds to the zest of living."

I invited him to come over to the "Golden Fleece" for a drink. He shook his head.

"I don't drink. Not many Barnstaple men do. We're Plymouth Brethren round here."

I wandered into the bar of the "Golden Fleece." He was quite right. A couple of farmers were talking about sheep-shearing. Otherwise the bar was empty.

I went into the big pannier market where women produced from huge baskets endless stores of clotted cream, eggs, butter, home-made jam, trussed ducks and fowls ready for roasting, new potatoes, seedlings, apples, gooseberries, cabbages and a few not very ripe strawberries.

They sat on benches behind their wares gossiping and drinking tea. They varied in age from sixteen to ninety.

There was an unceasing bustle and air of great activity, but there was more discussion about disease and death than about prices.

Again I noticed a strong disinclination to buy. I turned in at one o'clock to join the crowd testing the "farmer's ordinary" at the Central restaurant.

A large plate of duckling surrounded by vegetables of three sorts for two shillings, followed by apple tart with at least a quarter of a pound of rich Devon cream for sixpence was my lot, and I was completely satisfied, so satisfied indeed that to recover I boarded a bus bound for Westward Ho! at two o'clock, and half an hour later I alighted at Instow to find the tide right out and Appledore separated by about half a mile of sand and a few hundred yards of water.

A fat fisherman in a jersey showed me the way to cross the sands to shout for the Appledore ferry, but a little man behind him beckoned me, so I followed him down the quay steps on to the wet sands.

"He'm a girt lazy twoad, 'e be. Tu lazy to keep a boat 'issel', 'e tries to stop honest men vrum earnin' honest livin'. Come down along o' me, me deurr," and he led me at lightning speed over the wet sand, past racing sailing boats almost to the old Jamaican banana boats that were lying up in the Torridge estuary out of commission.

"My boat's down along," he said, and after a long trek I saw the sand suddenly shelve and *Vera*, his boat, was there, moored in mid-channel. It took him a long time to row up against the tide, and as we drew on to the other shore I saw men at work on three two-masted schooners, *Earl Cairns*, *Two Sisters* and *Ceres*, all of Bideford.

Small children were sailing home-made model yachts by the edge of the water, women were sitting in the sun on the slip-way knitting, and more children were climbing into boats, playing among the boulders and scrambling over the beach.

I wandered along many narrow, stone-flagged twittens or wynds, looked under cobbled arches into white-washed courts, marvelled at the narrowness of the streets and the number of inns, noticed that nearly all the gravestones in the churchyard were to master mariners or shipbuilders, and then saw a commotion on the edge of the estuary where the Taw and Torridge join to run out into the sea over Bideford Bar.

There were long black boats on both sides of the water, and men in blue jerseys and wading boots running and pulling in and letting out nets. I raced over the beach to see what I had never seen before, the netting of salmon.

It was a great piece of good fortune, because they only do this at low water, when the salmon are leaping, and never on Saturdays or Sundays. The procedure is for three men to launch out a boat, while the fourth holds the top corked end of a net. Another pays out the net quickly, while two more

*with*

# S.P.B. MAIS

who continues his quest for ENGLAND'S CHARACTER by visiting Devon, which he says is the richest and most colourful land

● "I am always happiest in this land of red earth and white cottages," he declares

swear that he was a Raleigh, a Grenville or a Burroughs.

As I boarded the *Vera* five fishermen gave her a push out and said very pointedly to my guide: "I hope you tak' notice o' that, me deurr, that's Appledore."

Apparently Instow behaves with less courtesy to the Appledore ferrymen. In a second he had hoisted a huge piece of canvas and we were racing across the estuary, which was now full of water. Very neatly he skirted the many sailing-boats lying at anchor.

I had forgotten to ask before starting what his price was for ferrying me to and from Appledore.

I have been ferried across many estuaries in many parts of the world. The average charge is tuppence. The Devonian, slow to part with money, is quick to accept it.

"Half a crown," he said.

You will be wise, unless you know your Devonians, not to be deceived by their melodious brogue and kindly faces. They drive a harder bargain than any other Englishman. I was glad to board the bus where the fares were plainly marked.

But, after all, this excessive charging cuts both ways. When I got back to Barnstaple, still nettled by my foolishness in omitting to state a price before I started, I resisted the temptation to buy a hunting crop at twelve shillings and sixpence, a hunting knife at eighteen shillings, and I denied myself the luxury of tea. In fact, I think I was in on the day.

And the next day, as a sort of hangover of economy, I also resisted the temptation to have a two-hours' ride for ten shillings and contented myself with one hour at six shillings.

I spent a happy evening at the "Chichester Arms" at Mortehoe, a white-washed inn of great antiquity, where the only sign of Plymouth Brotherhood was manifested by "Sid," who told us that when he entered the Army in 1893 it was a dog's life, but "owing to the Kayzer" it was now a gentleman's life. Having sung "Old Faithful" he turned to "Abide with Me," which brought tears to his eyes, so he provided an antidote by singing a psalm which turned out to be anything but psalm-like in its content.

Tom Parker who, year after year, looks after the two donkeys on Woolacombe beach told me that one of them, Mary, had died on her legs at the age of twenty-seven, just a month before.

"And my poor father," he went on, "who died last autumn, said to me with his dying breath; 'Mary'll not live twelve month after me,' and me old dad was right."

He invited me to attend the quarterly rocket apparatus display of the Mortehoe Life Saving Association the next day.

"There be no reg'lar coastguard," he said. "I be an auxiliary. I'm in charge, an' there be twenty-two men to be drilled under me. Yew putt on your riding-breeches, me deurr, and us'll give 'ee a ride in breeches-buoy from ship's mast to zemetery, 'twull be dree hundred yards, zure nuff."

That sounded an excellent idea to me.

So the next afternoon, a perfect cloudless day of June, I endeavoured to be on Morte Hill at 2.30. I was a little late. Exactly at 2.30 from below I saw on the skyline a little group of men in shirt-sleeves, and then came a puff of smoke as the maroon was fired and I ran up the hill to find about a dozen men in shirt-sleeves with numbered armlets on their arms pulling on a rope.

"Tez landed right on mast-head," I heard on all sides.

Tom Parker in his neat Sunday suit of brown stood in the middle giving directions, and three officers in naval uniforms and rows of war medals stood giving contradictory orders and calling each other "Mr."

"Turn round 'seven' and 'three.' Turn round all and run away with it, lads," was the first order I heard. Some three hundred yards away stood a look-out pole on the hilltop. Over the valley between ran a succession of ropes, with one of which the amateur coastguards were being implored to run.

Number three, a humorous, dark-skinned athlete in red and black football jersey and motor mechanic's overalls was left to pull the rope alone, while the rest mysteriously were told off to do something with another rope, called the whip.

"Now, even numbers to the right whip, lads." These others consisted of a couple of farm hands, the sweep, two stolid elders who might have been publicans or grocers, and young men in corduroy, as typical a collection of villagers as ever you'd meet.

They might have been the village cricket eleven out for net practice. One group began attaching the breeches-buoy to a rope.

The breeches-buoy was a life-belt with a sort of trouser leg attachment. This was slowly being hauled up towards the masthead, making a noise exactly like a hay-mower.

I saw a man start to climb this mast.

"Now numbers 5, 7 and 9, start to put up the tripod." Three men started to erect a triangle of iron poles, and behind it other men did complicated evolutions with ropes and a pulley.

"No. 1, go back to anchor," shouted one of the officers.

"Better have a half-hitch," growled somebody. Red flags were waved from both ends.

The man on the masthead entered the breeches-buoy, committed himself to the rope, and after spinning round like a top came sailing high over the grass towards us, while our brave motor-mechanic Bert Yeo, donkeyman, Tom Parker, fish merchant, Ted Conybeare, and the rest pulled with a will.

But in spite of the tripod, the intricate pulley, the whips, commands and counter-commands from the officers in uniform, the rescued man suddenly stopped

(*continued on next page*)

● Eagerly drawing in the net to see their luck

row in a wide half circle, coming into shore again in about three or four minutes a hundred yards lower down. All four men then draw in the net, two to the top end and two to the bottom, craning their necks to see what their catch is.

The first net I saw arrive contained two superb gleaming salmon flashing this way and that until in an instant they were seized, clubbed on the head with a wooden mallet and lay dead. Other boats lie farther up the beach, waiting their turn, and as soon as the net is clear the next boat sets out on its gambling journey.

One boat I saw caught seven salmon, and one containing a tiny, curly-headed girl and two very old fishermen wearing Norwegian whaling caps, their arms a mass of tattoos, and gold earrings in their ears, caught nothing.

And even here I heard general grumbling.

All along the Appledore streets I heard only one topic of conversation. "What luck?"

And the answer:

"Baint smelt one yet, me deurr."

I was surprised to see one fisherman carefully lock his cottage door, walk five yards on to the sea wall and there sit with field glasses, looking out on the nets being hauled in, with exactly the air of a keen betting man watching the Derby.

An extraordinarily fine-looking giant with a big Roman nose and the finely chiselled features of an Elizabethan courtier, stood by the Sailor's Rest in riding breeches, holding a bicycle. I'm prepared to

● Coming up the High Street, Clovelly

# CONTINUING *Down* DEVON *Way*

in mid-air, his legs dangling through the holes in the breeches-buoy, and then inconsequently came on by slow jerks until he reached a steep bank, whereupon he elected to walk towards his rescuer, who was encased in a cork life-belt.

They met like Livingstone and Stanley, most affectionately, and in a few moments the rescued man lay stretched out inert on a tarpaulin sheet. He put up so good a show of inaction that I thought he was really exhausted.

Tom Parker knelt on him and pressing in his ribs said : "One, two three," pause, "four, five," the senior officer standing over him.

"I don't quite agree with that," said the inspecting officer, and himself knelt on the inert man and gave an illustration of how to pump water out of a man's lungs.

"And what would you do now?" asked the inspecting officer.

"Rub 'ens arms thiccy way."

"Right," "Not holding 'em up, 'cos the effort may be too great for the heart." "What then?"

"Let 'en bide vur an hour."

"No," interrupted one of the bystanders. "Hot water bottles at arm-pits, thighs, and soles of veet."

"Then let en bide vur an hour."

"Why?"

"'Cos ef en moved 'en, effort might stop heart ticken' over."

"Quite right, and what then?"

"I'd give 'en a drink."

The inspecting officer asked the rest of the rescue party whether they agreed with that. They agreed unanimously. He laughed.

"Everybody round here wants to give the man something to drink, but if you give him alcohol it may set the heart racing too fast. You look out for his wanting to be sick. If he wants to be sick he's getting better."

"I'd give 'en tea. He'd be turr'ble cold lying there," said someone.

The rescued man, tired of lying inert, now rose, and the inspecting officer made a polite speech of congratulation and disappeared.

"For the drink he'd deny to a drowning man," as one of the party said.

Then began a most complicated business of hauling in and coiling up the ropes into wooden boxes, which caused endless confusion and shouting and tangles.

At the end of one rope I saw a wooden board attached with advice in four languages—French, Dutch, German and English.

I read : "Fasten tail block to lower mast, well up. If masts gone then to best place handy."

I thought of this treacherous deadly Morte Point in a sou'west gale on a winter's night, and the wrecked ship's masts gone and these men called out from their beds to save the lives of drowning sailors.

It seemed incredible that anybody would stand a chance of being saved, and yet the inspecting officer had told me privately, what he told the men publicly, that their standard of efficiency was high.

"It's an odd thing," he said to me, "but they're always better if they're tradesmen or farm hands. The longshoreman's no good. He thinks he knows it all, and won't be taught, while the grocer, baker, garage man, and milkman are keen as mustard and eager to learn."

And at that moment came the counter-attraction of half a dozen porpoises leaping out of the sea in the calm bay below. At one moment they seemed to be within a few yards of the unconscious swimmers from the beach; the next they were racing towards Baggy Point.

"Plenty of zalmon in bay, I reckon to-day," said one of the life-savers. The ropes coiled into their boxes : there was a pause. No. 5 was missing and without him the boxes could not be hauled on to the red-wheeled wagonette, which contained the life-saving gear.

Eventually he was found, and the last I saw of the gang was sharply silhouetted against the skyline, the old horse pulling the heavy cart down the steep, grassy slope, while the team of men, still roped together, pulled her back from behind.

Rocket practice at Mortehoe is a rare event, but it is an event not to be missed.

Since then I have been exploring the least known part of Devon, round Hartland, which is so far from a railway station that the bus company can afford to charge 2s. 9d. for a cheap day return ticket from Bideford for a drive of not more than twenty-four miles in all.

Unloading the wagonette that carried the life-saving gear

The gang was sharply silhouetted against the skyline

Eventually he elected to walk towards his rescuer

The rescued man lay inert on a tarpaulin sheet

I first tried to hire a car for the round trip from Woolacombe. One firm wanted £3 10s., another wanted £3. I have, I hope, indicated that the Devonian knows how to charge. In the end, by an intricate medley of car, bus and train, I managed to do the round for twenty-five shillings.

I took the train from Mortehoe to Barnstaple and there picked up the bus for Bideford.

I was glad of an hour's wait at Bideford because I had read in the newspapers the day before that there was tremendous activity in the ship-building yard and that in Bideford trade was booming. In view of this statement I was surprised to find the waterside completely quiet except for the great hulks, *Scottish Minstrel of London* and *Marietta of Liverpool*, lying up out of commission, the schooner, *Rosetta of Aberystwyth*, unloading cement from Newhaven, and a motor yacht, *Shauneen*, above which were collected at least two score unemployed men.

It was more cheerful to be on the road again to Clovelly with the hedges a riot of wild roses, red-ragged robins, honey-suckle, fresh groups of ferns, sudden bursts of rhododendrons springing into view over the tops. Far below lay the still blue waters of Barnstaple Bay separated from a sky of precisely the same blue by wisps of white mist that tantalisingly now hid and now revealed the loveliness of the golden sands of Saunton over the water and the distant rounded moorland of Exmoor.

We ran down into the dips and out again of the white hamlets of Fairy Cross, Horn's Cross and Buck's Cross and at the top of Clovelly the bus disgorged all its occupants but me.

You must take Clovelly as read. I have nothing new to say about it, but I don't understand the complete neglect of Hartland.

I arrived in its long straggling, picturesque street of colourful houses at 1.20. There was not a dog stirring. After bread, cheese and beer at the New Inn, I hired a car for 12s. 6d. to take me to the little unknown villages that make this corner of Devon so enchanting.

First, of course, I stopped to admire once more Hartland church which boasts not only the most imposing spire in Devon, but surely possesses the most decorative rood-screen in the country. The stained-glass in the windows contains the Coats of Arms of most of the best known families of the West which have at one time or other been associated with Hartland Abbey that was founded close on 900 years ago.

Some three miles on lies Hartland Quay, an astonishing example of the power of the waves to batter down rocks and man's defences. The old quay is completely destroyed and great slabs of slate stick up out of the water almost needle-sharp in thinness.

Lundy from here seems immensely high out of the water and rather stockish. I then drove down a succession of narrow, high-banked lanes gay with fox-gloves to Welcombe Mouth, where a gentle stream meanders down a combe with steep bracken-covered slopes on either side to a wide beach of rocks cut like streaks of bacon.

On the high tableland above I passed the gutted ruins of Welcombe House, a quaint, staring, grotesque and pitiable skeleton, and some miles on I came to Welcombe Post Office, a quiet isolated cottage facing a little common where Monday's washing decorated every bush.

And immediately after passing Welcombe Cross I had crossed the border into Cornwall. The view just here is one of the outstanding views in England. Southward I looked over rich red fields to the dim blue tors of Dartmoor forty miles away.

Eastward I could still see Exmoor and westward clouds were scurrying over the peaks of Brown Willy and Rough Tor; and jutting out into the dark sea I could see the black island rock of Tintagel. Then I swerved seaward once more, past the white-washed, lonely Bush Inn to the secluded little granite church of Morwenstow, once in the care of that grand friend of all fishermen, the patriotic Cornish poet, Stephen Hawker, whose fine granite vicarage lies at the head of the combe leading down to the sea.

Morwenstow churchyard, like Hartland, is entered by a stile composed of five steps and an upright slab of slate. The font at Morwenstow is Celtic and within a few years of its thousandth birthday.

In a corner of the churchyard and under the trees is a shining white figurehead of an old ship, a sufficient indication of Morwenstow's chief preoccupation.

But the crowning glory of this hamlet is Tonacombe. When you are next in the West Country make a point of seeing this. I drove down a long drive to vast iron gates with a peacock on the garden wall behind and two eagles in stone perched on the gatepost.

A little two-storeyed gabled stone mullioned manor house lies within, protected by trees and the folds of the hills. But it has other protections.

This tiny manor house, built in 1296, actually has a portcullis as if it were a castle. It has a banqueting hall with minstrels' gallery and a panelled bedroom that is decently haunted.

I was shown Sir Francis Drake's day-couch, beautifully embroidered, and I was shown a ship's lantern made from the stems of broken wineglasses. You remember that Sir Richard Grenville always crunched the glass of all his wine glasses and enjoyed eating it. I was shown a full-length portrait of Sir Bevil Grenville and then taken down to see about a million tadpoles in the fishponds, over which three buzzards wheeled mewling.

Tonacombe will give you the quickest insight into the family life of the Raleighs, Drakes, Burroughs, Hawkins and other Elizabethan seamen that you can imagine. But the Devon people are queer.

I travelled with an Axminster farmer the other day who said : "If you talk to a Devon man for five minutes he's your friend for life. He's got nothing to hide."

And in the Ship Inn in Exeter a man from Glasgow said to me : "In Scotland as soon as they see a stranger coming they put the kettle on the hob. In Devon as soon as they see a stranger coming they take it off."

Be that as it may, and there is some justification for this attack on their lack of generosity, the Devon land is the richest and most colourful I know, and I am always happiest in this land of red earth and white cottages.

SHORT SHORT STORY Complete on this page

● "This is a kind horse, a gentle and faithful horse. I will name him after good St. Joseph"

# SECRET *for* TWO

*by* Quentin Reynolds

MONTREAL is a very large city, but like all large cities it has some very small streets. Streets, for instance, like Prince Edward Street which is only four blocks long, ending in a cul-de-sac. No one knew Prince Edward Street as well as did Pierre Dupin, for Pierre had delivered milk to the families on that street for thirty years now.

During the past fifteen years the horse which drew the milk wagon used by Pierre was a large white horse named Joseph. In Montreal, especially in that part of Montreal which is very French, the animals, like children, are often given the names of saints. When the big white horse first came to the Provincale Milk Company he didn't have a name. They told Pierre that he could use the white horse henceforth. Pierre stroked the softness of the horse's neck; he stroked the sheen of its splendid belly and he looked into the eyes of the horse.

"This is a kind horse, a gentle and a faithful horse," Pierre said. "And I can see a beautiful spirit shining out of the eyes of the horse. I will name him after good St. Joseph, who was also kind and gentle and faithful and a beautiful spirit."

Within a year Joseph knew the milk route as well as Pierre. Pierre used to boast that he didn't need reins—he never touched them. Each morning Pierre arrived at the stables of the Provincale Milk Company at five o'clock. The wagon would be loaded and Joseph hitched to it. Pierre would call "*Bon jour veille ami,*" as he climbed into his seat and Joseph would turn his head and the other drivers would say that the horse would smile at Pierre. Then Jacques, the foreman, would say, "All right, Pierre, go on," and Pierre would call softly to Joseph, "*Avance, mon ami,*" and this splendid combination would stalk proudly down the street.

Pierre would boast at the stable of Joseph's skill, "I never touch the reins. He knows just where to stop. Why, a blind man could handle my route with Joseph pulling the wagon."

So it went for years—always the same. Pierre and Joseph both grew old together, but gradually, not suddenly. Pierre's huge walrus moustache was pure white now and Joseph didn't raise his head quite as much. Jacques never noticed that they were both getting old until Pierre appeared one morning carrying a heavy walking stick.

"Hey, Pierre," Jacques laughed. "Maybe you got the gout, hey?"

"*Mais oui, Jacques,*" Pierre said a bit uncertainly. "One grows old. One's legs get tired."

"You should teach that horse to carry the milk to the front door for you," Jacques told him. "He does everything else."

He knew every one of the forty families he served on Prince Edward Street. The cooks knew that Pierre could neither read nor write, so instead of following the usual custom of leaving a note in an empty bottle if an additional quart of milk was needed, they would sing out when they heard the rumble of his wagon wheels over the cobbled street, "Bring an extra quart this morning, Pierre."

"So you have company for dinner to-night," he would call back gaily.

Pierre had a remarkable memory. When he arrived back at the stable he'd always remember to tell Jacques, "The Paquins took an extra quart this morning; the Lemoines bought a pint of cream."

Jacques would note these things in a little book he always carried. Most of the drivers had to make out the weekly bills and collect the money, but Jacques, liking Pierre, had always excused him from this task. All Pierre had to do was to arrive at five in the morning, walk to his wagon, which was always in the same spot at the curb and deliver his milk. He returned some two hours later, got down stiffly from his seat, called a cheery "*Au 'voir*" to Jacques and then limped slowly down the street.

One morning the president of the Provincale Milk Company came to inspect the early morning deliveries. Jacques pointed Pierre out to him and said, "Watch how he talks to that horse. See how the horse listens and how he turns his head towards Pierre? See the look in that horse's eyes? You know, I think those two share a secret. I have often noticed it. It is as though they both sometimes chuckle at us as they go off on their route. Pierre is a good man, Monsieur President, but he gets old. Would it be too bold of me to suggest that he be retired and be given perhaps a small pension?" he added anxiously.

"But of course," the President laughed. "I know his record. He has been on this route now for thirty years and never once has there been a complaint. Tell him it is time he rested. His salary will go on just the same."

But Pierre refused to retire. He was panic-stricken at the thought of not driving Joseph every day. "We are two old men," he said to Jacques. "Let us wear out together. When Joseph is ready to retire—then I, too, will quit."

Jacques, who was a kind man, understood. There was something about Pierre and Joseph which made a man smile tenderly. It was as though each drew some hidden strength from the other. When Pierre was sitting in his seat, and when Joseph was hitched to the wagon, neither seemed old. But when they finished their work then Pierre would limp down the street slowly, seeming very old indeed, and the horse's head would drop and he would walk very wearily back to his stall.

Then one morning Jaques had dreadful news for Pierre when he arrived. It was a cold morning and still pitch dark. The air was like iced wine that morning and the snow which had fallen during the night glistened like a million diamonds.

Jacques said: "Pierre, your horse, Joseph, did not wake up this morning. He went to sleep last night and never woke up. He was very old, Pierre, he was twenty-five and that is like being seventy-five for a man."

"Yes," Pierre said, slowly, "Yes. I am seventy-five. And I cannot see Joseph again."

"Of course you can," Jacques soothed. "He is over in his stall looking very peaceful. Go over and see him."

Pierre took one step forward then turned. "No . . . no . . . you don't understand, Jacques."

Jacques clapped him on the shoulder. "We'll find another horse just as good as Joseph Why, in a month you'll teach him to know your route as well as Joseph did—so well that you won't even have to touch the reins. We'll——"

The look in Perre's eyes stopped him. For years Pierre had worn a heavy cap, the peak of which came low over his eyes, keeping the bitter morning wind out of them. Now Jacques looked into Pierre's eyes and he saw something which startled him. He saw a dead lifeless look in them. The eyes were mirroring the grief that was in Pierre's heart and his soul. It was as though his heart and soul had died and you could look through his eyes and see the deadness.

"Take to-day off, Pierre," Jacques said, but already Pierre was hobbling off down the street and had one been near one would have seen tears streaming down his cheeks and have heard half smothered sobs. Pierre walked to the corner and stepped into the street. There was a warning yell from the driver of a huge truck that was coming fast and there was the scream of brakes, but Pierre apparently heard neither.

Five minutes later an ambulance driver said: "He's dead. Was killed instantly."

Jacques and several of the milk wagon drivers had arrived and they looked down at the still figure which had been Pierre Dupin.

"I couldn't help it," the driver of the truck protested, "he walked right into my truck. He never saw it, I guess. Why, he walked into it as though he were blind."

The ambulance doctor bent down. "Blind? Of course the man was blind. Look at his eyes. See those cataracts? This man has been blind for five years." He turned to Jacques: "You say he worked for you? Didn't you know he was blind?"

"No . . . no . . ." Jacques said, softly. "None of us knew. Only one knew—a friend of his named Joseph. . . . It was a secret, I think, just between those two."

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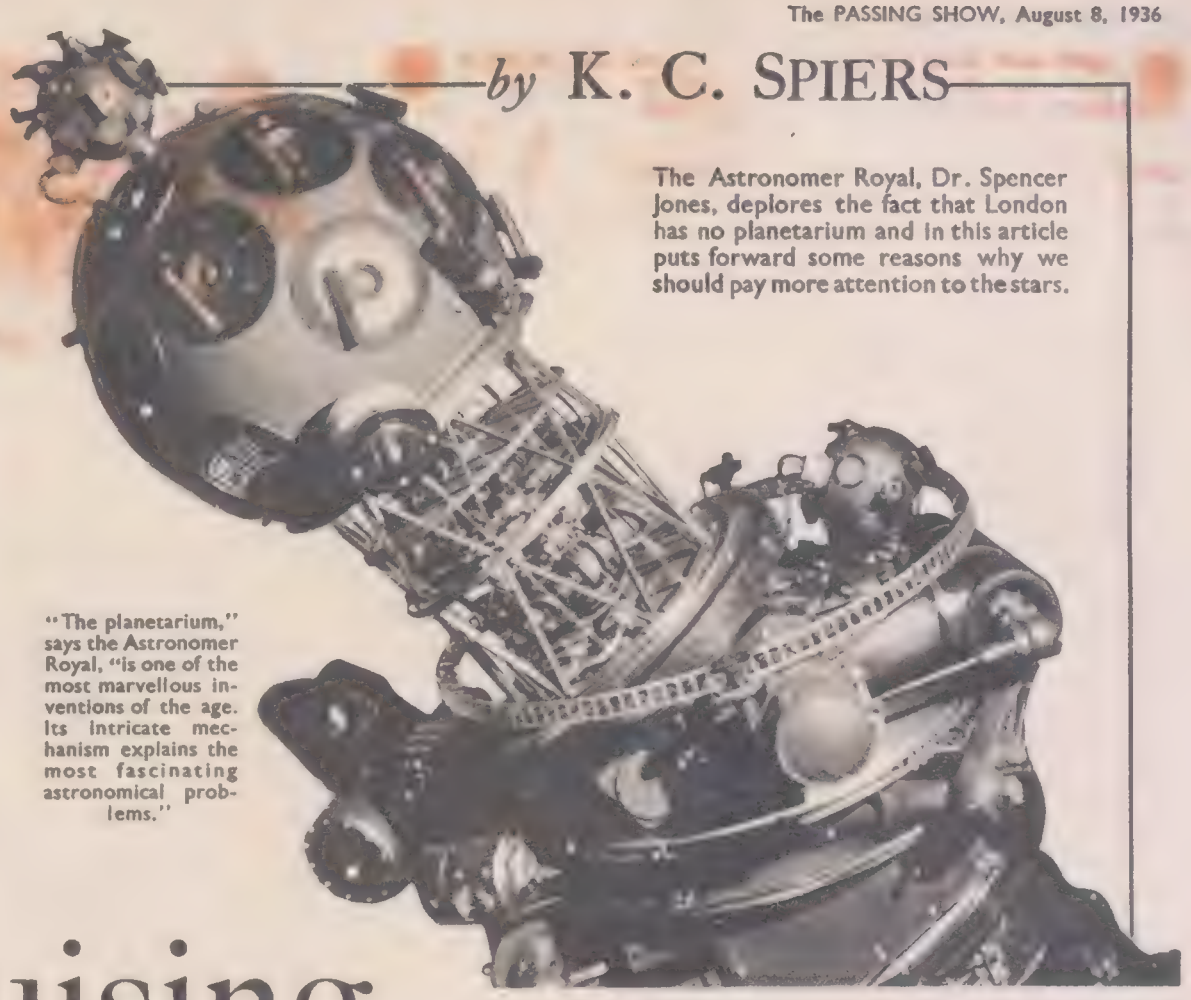
# Cruising *among the* STARS

*by* K. C. SPIERS

The Astronomer Royal, Dr. Spencer Jones, deplores the fact that London has no planetarium and in this article puts forward some reasons why we should pay more attention to the stars.



"The planetarium," says the Astronomer Royal, "is one of the most marvellous inventions of the age. Its intricate mechanism explains the most fascinating astronomical problems."

MANY are the disappointments of the would-be explorers of stellar space. Rarely is earth's vast curtain of cloud drawn from across the nightly stage of the Olympian Theatre. Only on a few nights in the year in these Northern latitudes is a perfectly clear sky visible to the naked eye and to the telescope.

Vagaries of weather frequently nullify the efforts of those who would solve the riddle of the Universe. Star-gazing even for the professional astronomer equipped with the finest instruments in the greatest observatories in the world demands infinite patience and perseverance.

The crowded state of our cities and towns, the pall of smoke that hangs over them, even when it does not take the form of fog, and the myriad illuminations of pavement and shop are baffling deterrents to the amateur. Of the thousand amateur enthusiasts who assist the Astronomer Royal by their nightly watch on the heavens most of them live on the heights around London, or in the open country spaces surrounding the metropolis.

If you are not interested, deeply, intensely and absorbingly interested in the World of Stars of which we are only a speck in the Universe it is because you lack the opportunity. But soon, even as soon as next year, London may have a Stellar Theatre which is going to offer a new and simple means of gratifying this craving for knowledge of the Universe.

Plans are under consideration for the building of a Stellar Theatre in London. Similar to the astral "movies" recently opened in New York and Los Angeles and Brussels; and, within the last ten years, in Chicago, Berlin, Barmen, Dresden, Dusseldorf, Leipzig, Mannheim, Nuremberg, Vienna, Milan, Rome, Moscow, Stockholm, Osaka, and in Jena the home of the Zeiss Planetarium. Another planetarium is shortly to be built in Paris.

Chicago's space theatre has already been visited by two million people. "So one cannot say that the millions are not interested in astronomy," said the Astronomer Royal.

Dr. Spencer Jones is an ardent advocate of the planetarium.

"The amazing thing about the planetarium," he says, " is that when you are inside the building and the images of the stars are thrown on to the dome by powerful projectors the illusion of being in the open watching the stars is complete. It is difficult to persuade oneself that what one is looking at is merely a screen.

"In addition to the stars the projectors throw images of the Sun, Moon, and the bright planets, Jupiter, Venus, Mars, and others. The gearing of the projectors and the actual mechanism itself is so wonderfully designed that the motion of these heavenly bodies is reproduced with a very high degree of accuracy.

"This mechanism and this accuracy and the different ways in which the elaborate apparatus of the planetarium can be used to make it possible to explain and demonstrate all sorts of fascinating astronomical phenomena.

"You can set the instrument to correspond to any day of the year and you will find the sun rising at its correct point and setting at its correct point for that day. The planetarium makes it easy to understand how the passage of the sun across the heavens and its maximum height that varies between winter and summer brings about the change of the seasons.

"It is possible to show what the heavens are like as seen from the North Pole or from Cape Town or in the West Indies. The planetarium can take you back thousands of years and show you the heavens over Bethlehem when Christ was born. It shows you why it is that the moon, continuously moving Eastward among the stars, rises later and later night by night; how the eclipses of the sun and moon occur and when they occur.

"It enables you to understand why Venus, our astral neighbour, is only visible as an evening star a few hours after sunset, or, at other times, as a morning star for a few hours before sunrise; and why this planet does not also appear at times in the Southern sky at midnight.

"One of the most fascinating things to me about the planetarium," continued the Astronomer Royal, "is that it is possible to go backwards and forwards over hundreds and thousands of years and clearly demonstrate that the Pole Star which we use as a convenient index in the heavens has not always been and will not always be, near the Pole.

"Thousands of years ago the Pole Star was, and thousands of years hence the Pole Star will be considerably distant from the North Pole. In the past it has not always served, and in the future it will not always serve to indicate the position of the true North. A planetarium is, indeed, one of the most marvellous inventions of the age, and I should most ardently welcome any movement to have one erected somewhere in the heart of the metropolis."

The Adler Planetarium in Chicago.

Now come with me into this Stellar Theatre. As we enter the rotunda a light blue canopy will dimly and vaguely reveal itself to the eyes. But we must wait awhile in the semi-darkness before we can get used to our surroundings.

The lecturer has begun his introductory remarks as we take our seats and the wonder grows.

A deep silence falls upon the audience as the glow of the setting sun floods the horizon. The faint humming of unseen delicately meshed motors is heard and above the rim of sundown the Moon and stars are seen bursting into starry radiance. The throb of astonishment among the spectators is followed by almost mesmeric interest. It is as if one had been lifted from the earth into the Infinite.

The rotunda has a diameter of sixty to eighty feet. The hemispherical screen upon which the astral drama of Time and Space is being enacted has a surface of some 1,200 square yards. There are from two to six hundred star-gazers around you. As quiet as ghosts in a ghostly environment.

"That's Venus," someone exclaims, and the lecturer explains why this lovely star does not appear in the Southern sky at night.

"Venus," he says, using a luminous pointer that throws an arrow of light on the Map of Mystery, "circles about the Sun within the orbit of the earth and therefore can never be seen in the midnight direction."

The lecturer points out that in nature the times required by the planets to complete their orbits around the sun occupy many days and many years in our puny reckoning.

Our day is made up of 1,440 minutes and our year of 525,600 minutes. It is necessary to speed up the planetary movements of the planetarium to follow the design of the Universe. Here the "slow motion" pictures of the cinema is reversed. Time is compressed. The phenomenal occurrences of the heavens in the course of a night, a week, a month, a year, in fifty thousand years, are reduced to the space of a few minutes.

The actual movements may be 1,440, or innumerable times that, faster than they occur in the heavens themselves. This model of the Universe—although we have forgotten it is a model—has no fewer than one hundred and nineteen optical projectors that cause the jewelled images to appear and rotate in the giant hemispherical screen.

Cosmic events which in reality occupy days and years and centuries are explained with scientific precision in a few minutes; in the course of an hour's instruction and entertainment.

Time after time we become oblivious of our actual surroundings, so magical is the effect of the Star Theatre. The lecturer can show you what would be Eternal Day or Everlasting Night; or take you for a voyage to the Midnight Sun : or from the North Pole to the Equator; or round the earth from pole to pole; and in twenty minutes or half an hour you will have seen the change in the aspect of the starry skies in many latitudes.

If the cinema has gained a hold on your heart and imagination, here is something that will cast a spell on your memory for ever : a Stellar Theatre.

*Father believed in Progress and Processions but James believed in a good "Scene"*

# Too Good

*by* WILL SCOTT

NOBODY had ever known such a day. Up the street and down the street, as far as you could see (even by leaning right out over the balcony), there was nothing but little flags and big rosettes and small cardboard shields in red, white, and blue : nothing but waving colours under a bright blue sky. True, some of the cardboard shields had the date 1831 on them, which showed, if you were mean enough to notice, that they had been hidden away somewhere for five years, since the coronation of William the Fourth. But of course you were not mean enough to notice a thing like that on a day like this. All you *did* notice was the fun that everybody was having.

October or not, the sun was as hot as June; and if the breeze from the sea at the end of the street had a touch of November about it, between them—sun and breeze—they just made things right, showing up the gay decorations and fluttering the ribbons in the new poke bonnets down below. And as for crowds, William Street had never seen the like.

Janet, in *her* new poke bonnet, was down at the corner by the Sea Front for the fourth time in half an hour, worrying about what had happened to Nathaniel; whilst Mr. Lucy, in the very latest thing in peg-top trousers (but without his coat, which was over the back of the horse-hair chair inside the room), was dangerously out over the rails of the balcony with one end of a string of bunting in his hand. The letters on the string of bunting spelt the word "Progress," a little shot which Mr. Lucy had kept in his locker till this last moment. "Welcome" there was in plenty down both sides of William Street, but this was the only "Progress." Even if you didn't quite approve, you had to admit it was different.

It *would* be "Progress," of course. No moss grew on Mr. Lucy. After all, this *was* 1836, and the world *had* moved since Waterloo, even though you couldn't get some people to admit it. "Progress." . . . Mr. Lucy was a Modern.

"I will be glad," said Mrs. Lucy, who, inside the room, held the other end of the string of bunting, "when this day is over. There is so much to think about that I am quite bemused."

Which was just another of those chances for which the Child seemed to wait all day.

The Child was eight. It had spent the morning on the balcony throwing things down at people, or inside the room prying into matters which did not concern it, and asking question after question after question, making a complete nuisance of itself, as it generally did—which was why it was invited down from Dulwich so seldom. Being only eight, it didn't know everything. But it was willing to learn.

"What's *bemused*?" it asked.

The other end of the string of bunting was jerked out of Mrs. Lucy's hands and the last "s" of "Progress" tied into its place. Mr. Lucy eased up over the iron railing of the balcony and wiped his brow.

"What's *bemused*?" asked the Child.

"Here comes Janet back again without Nathaniel," said Mrs. Lucy, pointing down into the street. "What on earth can it mean? He can't have missed the boat, can he?" And when nobody answered here : "Can he have missed the boat?" But still nobody answered her.

"What's *bemused*?" asked the Child.

"You mustn't ask a lot of questions at a time like this, darling," said Mrs. Lucy. "You can see we are very busy trimming the house for the procession. Get a book and read; that's a good girl."

"I hate books and having to read," the Child grumbled.

"Well, talk to Penelope Ann or something."

The Child looked at Penelope Ann and seemed to find the look sufficient. Penelope Ann, twenty-three, in from the country at five pounds a year and her keep, was officially holding a bouquet of little flags until Mr. Lucy saw fit to want them, and unofficially—with her nose too close to the wall—devouring a steel engraving of Roman orgies of a nature which it seemed unlikely could ever be any concern of hers.

The Child sniffed and turned away.

"Could I have an apple?" she asked.

"Anything, darling, but be *quiet*," said Mrs. Lucy.

Janet, new poke bonnet and all, came in at that moment, came in with stamping heels and slammed the door. Mr. Lucy did not approve of his daughter's ways, but telling her did no good.

"The steamer," said Janet, "has been at the Pier head for the last hour. Nathaniel could have got here six times over. I'm tired of going to the corner to look for him."

"I hope he didn't fall overboard!" said Mrs. Lucy, who always managed to think of things like that on high days.

'Not until the sea is made of brandy and water, mama, will there be the slightest danger of that with Nathaniel!" asserted Janet, stamping to the sofa and picking up a book which she made no attempt to read.

The brow of Mr. Lucy now being satisfactorily wiped, Mr. Lucy tucked his bright green handkerchief into his trousers pocket and came into the room.

"Flags!" he said briefly, in the way these moderns have who have also Mr. Lucy's genius for organising things.

Penelope Ann, however, was still some centuries away in Ancient Rome.

"Flags!" shouted Mr. Lucy.

Penelope Ann jumped round and jumped forward. "Oh!" she said suddenly. She handed the little flags to Mr. Lucy. Then she jumped back to Ancient Rome.

"That's all," said Mr. Lucy.

"Oh!" And Penelope Ann got out of the room as quickly as she could.

"What's *dilatory*?" asked the Child, behind its apple.

"Uncle knows you want everybody here, so *he* won't be missing," said Mrs. Lucy.

Far down the street, near the Church Schools, a sudden cheer was raised.

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Lucy. "They've started, and we're not ready!"

"We *are* ready," Mr. Lucy snapped, "and they *haven't* started. They don't start till midday, as I've told you." He jabbed the little flags into position and stood back to look at the effect. "Janet—there's an official programme somewhere : doesn't it say twelve o'clock?" He looked over his shoulder at Janet, who was still not reading the book. "Janet!' It's no good sulking with us because of Nathaniel."

"Sulking? I'm not sulking!" Janet sat up and threw the book aside.

"Well, what time does it say?"

"What time *what*?" said Janet.

"What time do the festivities commence?"

"Twelve o'clock. Everybody knows," Janet answered.

"But what time does the official programme say?"

Janet, sighing, referred to the official programme, which was on the piano. "Twelve o'clock," she read out.

"There you are," said Mr. Lucy to Mrs. Lucy. "I *said* twelve o'clock."

"What's *dilatory*?" asked the child.

"Will you go and sit down somewhere until we're ready!" Mr. Lucy said sternly.

'There are some beads on the sideboard," said Mrs. Lucy. "You may thread them. But do mind Grandma's vase. If anything happened to that I think I should die."

"You women!" Mr. Lucy gave a mock sigh.

Quite unexpectedly Janet addressed the ceiling. "If Nathaniel has been drinking again I shall give him a piece of my mind."

"Come!" pleaded Mr. Lucy. "There isn't a man in the town won't have had a drop too much before to-day's out. God bless my soul! What do you think to-day *is*? *Any* day? You'll remember this day, my child, as long as you live. If you live to be ninety you'll remember it. You'll tell your great grandchildren. You'll say : 'I can remember the day they laid the foundation-stone of the Clock

# to be MISSED

Tower quite clearly. *We* had a window in William Street and saw everything in perfect comfort. That was a day, that was! And ours was the nicest house in the town.' That's what you'll say."

"And now all we want is the chairs," he said. "Six chairs."

"Seven," said the Child, without looking up from the box of beads.

Mr. Lucy, surprised, began to tick off on his fingers.

"Six," said he.

"Seven," said the Child.

"The two of us—two," said Mr. Lucy, ticking again: "Janet and Nathaniel—four; Uncle—five; the Child here, six. Six!"

"Penelope Ann—seven," the Child added.

"Penelope Ann?" said Mrs. Lucy.

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Lucy.

"Penelope Ann won't be *here*," Mrs. Lucy explained.

"Why?" said the Child.

"Penelope Ann will be *downstairs*," said Mrs. Lucy.

"Why?" said the Child.

"Penelope Ann will see the procession from the pavement. She'll see very nicely there, too."

"Why?" said the Child.

"*Why?*" Mrs. Lucy looked at Mr. Lucy. "Why?" she asked limply.

"Penelope Ann is only the maid-of-all-work," said Mr. Lucy. "She's not one of the family. Up here is for the family."

"Why?" said the Child.

"Why?" echoed the exasperated Mr. Lucy. "Because—"

"She lives here," said the Child.

"That makes no difference at all!"

"Is Uncle from Herne one of the family?"

"Of course Uncle from Herne is one of the family."

"But he doesn't live here. He lives at Herne."

"You're too young to understand these things," Mr. Lucy said wearily. "You'll have more sense when you grow older—at least we must hope so! Penelope Ann is a *servant*."

"Once you said Uncle from Herne used to be a coachman," the Child reminded him.

"He's not *my* servant!"

"Is that why he can sit on the balcony here?"

"Yes."

"But not on the balcony where he used to be coachman *at*?"

"The procession doesn't go past there."

"But if it did?"

"I don't *know*! Stop asking questions. And tell Penelope Ann we want three more chairs in here."

The Child went out to the landing and called "Pen-el-o-pe A-ANN!" at the top of its voice. "She didn't say anything," she said, returning.

"She's imbecilic!" Mr. Lucy declared.

"What's *imbecilic*?" asked the Child.

"If I told you you wouldn't comprehend," said Mr. Lucy.

"What's *comprehend*?' asked the Child.

"Now, look," said Mr. Lucy; "you go out on the balcony at once, or I shan't let you see the procession."

He meant it, and the Child knew. Without another word it retired to the balcony.

Penelope Ann brought the three chairs, deposited them at the side of the room nearest Ancient Rome, where they were not wanted, and gave herself up once more to Orgies.

"That's all!" said Mr. Lucy.

"Oh!" said Penelope Ann, and went away.

"Did you ever hear that girl say anything else but 'Oh'?" Mr. Lucy demanded of his wife. "Have *her* on the balcony to see the procession, indeed! A magnificent notion, I must remark!"

Mr. Lucy took the three chairs to the high french window and arranged them grandstand fashion, with the others in line, just inside the balcony.

"Best view in the town," he said proudly.

"It's lovely," Mrs. Lucy agreed. "We shall be able to see everything."

"What did I say!" Mr. Lucy purred.

It was now that the Child put its head into the room to announce the coming of Nathaniel up the street, and Mrs. Lucy took the occasion to advise her daughter.

"Do not be too firm with him, my dear. It is everybody's holiday and we want to enjoy ourselves."

"Don't agitate yourself for me, mama," said Janet. "I shall enjoy myself!"

Which she did, as soon as Nathaniel arrived, giving him no time to say even how-do-you-do. She reminded him that the boat from Greenwich had been at the Pier head since a quarter to eleven and that he could have been here, in this very room, since a little after eleven if he had tried. She reminded him that the last time he had been down to the Bay to see her he had been an hour late. It was not often he came, but every time he was an hour late. It was as well, she concluded, that she had found out these things before it was too late. . . .

"I'm very sorry, Janet," he said, kissing her. And then, breathing space for Janet giving him the opportunity, he wished Mr. and Mrs. Lucy a good morning and hoped he saw them well.

"We shan't be long now," Mrs. Lucy observed pleasantly. "I suppose the crowds are quite thick by this time." On which she retired tactfully to the balcony to see if the crowds *were* quite thick by this time.

"Thick!" echoed Nathaniel. "I should just say they were. I was talking to a man in the Divers' Arms just now——"

Janet, with a cold glance, flounced across the room and seated herself on the sofa, her back turned towards Nathaniel.

He tried again.

"I was talking to a man in the Divers' Arms just now——"

Did Janet sniff?

"*He* said," Nathaniel went on: "'The crowds are so thick we shall see nothing.' *I* said: 'I'm lucky. My young lady's people have a first floor window in William Street and we're all going to sit up there on chairs and see the procession in style.' *He* said: 'You *are* lucky.' *I* said: 'I know it.'" Nathaniel moved to the sofa and sat beside Janet. "I've been here two minutes, but although you've taken a kiss you haven't given one."

"I," said Janet, rising, "*I* have been here longer than two minutes!" And away she went and stood near the door, her new poke bonnet actually *shaking*.

"I'm sorry," Nathaniel repeated. "What's the matter?"

"You know very well what is the matter!"

"I've apologised."

"That took you less than five seconds. *I've* been waiting here for over an hour. I don't know how many times I've been to the Sea Front to meet you. But of course that doesn't matter. You've apologised!"

"Oh well, if that's the way you are——"

"I'm not any way!"

"I see. My fault again!"

"You're a brute!".

"If only you'd be reasonable——"

"And a beast!"

"Am I not to be allowed to speak?"

Here, Mr. Lucy decided, was where Organisation came in.

"I think," he said, "we ought to be taking our places. There will be plenty to see before the procession itself comes along. I've made it, you see, Nathaniel, rather like a grandstand. I'll pull this chair forward a little for Uncle, as he's getting on. You will sit here, and Janet——. Where *is* Janet?"

Where *was* Janet? They all looked round the room. Janet, had they only known, which they didn't, was on the wooden bench under the pear tree in the garden at the back. And *crying*, as women always will before you can get half-way through a holiday.

"This is very annoying," said Mr. Lucy. "How can one be expected to organise an event of this nature if people are going to pop out? We all ought to be here now."

"Uncle *is*," said Mrs. Lucy from the balcony. "He's just getting down from the dog-cart at the corner of William Street. And if you'll excuse me, Nathaniel, I'll go down and help him up the stairs. He's not as young as he used to be, you know."

"Well, for goodness' sake come *back*!" cried Mr. Lucy as his wife went out. "Good gracious me, it's almost hopeless!" he added, running his long fingers through his thinning hair. "As soon as you let the women into anything . . ." He plucked

(*continued on next page*)

# *Continuing* TOO GOOD to be MISSED

his coat off the back of the horsehair chair and put it on. "Here we are, all ready, and then they begin to disappear."

He talked about women in general for some minutes, Nathaniel moodily agreeing but inclined to keep the argument to one woman in particular.

"I'd do anything for Janet," said the young man.

"No, you would not, Nathaniel," declared Mr. Lucy. "You think you would, but you wouldn't. You wouldn't come out of the Divers' Arms for her half an hour ago."

"I mean serious things."

"You'd be surprised," Mr. Lucy told him, "what is serious to a woman. But that's enough. Here is my wife back with Uncle. We don't want them to hear. Not that Uncle could!"

Sixty-four, slow on his pins and as deaf as a post, Uncle from Herne had taken a full two minutes to negotiate the stairs and the door, insisting all the time as he held Mrs. Lucy's elbow for help that he wanted no help from Mrs. Lucy. He snorted, puffed, mopped his brow and then, making the bee-line of a slow and elderly bee towards his nephew, grabbed Mr. Lucy by the hand and peered anxiously into his face.

"How are you, my boy, how are you? You're not looking well. What's the matter?"

"Never felt better in my life," Mr. Lucy protested. "I'm as fit as a fiddle."

"What's he say, Maria?" Uncle appealed to Mrs. Lucy.

"He says he's as fit as a fiddle."

"I thought so as soon as I set eyes on him. You ought to look after him. Remember old Jake at Calcott? *He's* gone. Things oughtn't to be neglected." Uncle held Mrs. Lucy off at arm's length and looked at her even more anxiously. "Are you losing weight?" he asked.

"Putting it on since the last time you were here," Mrs. Lucy assured him.

"Maria's thinner," said Uncle to her husband.

"Stouter," declared Mr. Lucy. "We had her weighed at the Fair only last week.'

"It's the way this generation dashes about that does it," said Uncle. "There's no peace—no *rest*." And then, catching sight of Nathaniel: "Well, if there isn't Whatisname here!" He put out his hand. "How are you? Glad to see you."

"Quite well, thanks," said Nathaniel.

Uncle turned to Mr. Lucy.

"What *is* his name? I never was any good at names."

"Nathaniel," said Mr. Lucy.

"Janet's young man, isn't it?"

Mr. Lucy nodded.

"What's his name?"

"Nathaniel."

Uncle turned to Nathaniel.

"What's your name?"

"Nathaniel."

"Can't hear you."

"Nathaniel."

"Used not to be George, surely?" Uncle appealed to Mr. Lucy. "How many names has he got?"

But Mr. Lucy was saved from crisis by the Child, who was brought in to be introduced to Uncle from Herne, and who was remembered by Uncle from Herne although she did not remember Uncle.

"When you were *so* high," Uncle informed her, "I used to bounce you up and down on my knee every night. One, two, three—up!—down! Ha! ha! ha! One, two, three—up!—down! Ha! ha! ha! Oo was ickle-wickle girly then."

This was too much, even for the Child.

"Auntie," she said, "could I read a book?"

"Anything, if you'll keep out of the way," said Mrs. Lucy. "There's a nice book on the table, all about plants. But mind you don't knock Grandmama's vase down. If anything happens to *that* there'll be trouble."

The Child, making no promises, went to the table and found the book.

"What about taking our places?" asked Uncle. "We're all here, aren't we?" He looked round. "No, we're not. Where's Janet?"

"Where *is* Janet?" said Mr. Lucy.

Which at last found a use for the Child.

"Darling," said Mrs. Lucy, "peep through the landing window and see if Cousin Janet is in the garden."

The Child was willing. She had opened the book at a chapter on the smaller species of fungi. She went out and came back again in a moment.

"Cousin Janet is sitting under the pear tree, doing nothing," she informed them.

This was like a blow in the face to Mr. Lucy.

"Sitting under the pear tree?" he gasped. "Doing *nothing*? God bless my soul! Can she have forgotten that it's the procession in a minute or two?"

"I suppose this is my job?" Nathaniel murmured doubtfully.

"Tell her at once!" Mr. Lucy commanded.

And out went Nathaniel to tell Janet at once.

"Isn't it time it was starting?" Uncle inquired suddenly.

"Nathaniel's gone to fetch Janet," said Mr. Lucy.

"Who?"

"Nathaniel."

"Who's Nathaniel and what's he gone to do?"

Mr. Lucy gave it up and led Uncle to the middle chair in the "grand-stand."

"Ah!" said Uncle, sitting. "A lovely lot of decorations! A great day this is going to be. Lucky for us you had this window here. I'm getting a bit too old for standing in crowds. Crowds! I remember after the news of Waterloo—— Bless my soul! that's twenty-one years ago. Time flies. . . ."

Presently he wanted to know where Janet was and where the young man George had gone.

"What *can* have happened to them?" asked Mr. Lucy, watch in hand. "Take another peep," he said to the Child.

And the Child, carrying the book on fungi, went out to take another peep.

"You go to all this trouble preparing for an event like this," Mr. Lucy complained, "planning it out and organising it, and then the young people don't seem to have the slightest interest in what you've done."

"It's a great shame, dear," Mrs. Lucy sympathised.

"Isn't it time it was starting?" said Uncle.

"It still wants a few minutes."

"Can't hear you."

"Yes!" said the irritated Mr. Lucy.

Back from the other peep came the Child.

"They're both under the pear tree now, quarrelling," she said.

"Quarrelling?" Mr. Lucy went a bright brick red. "This is disgraceful! It is most thoughtless! They'll miss everything! After the trouble I've taken. . . ."

He stamped to the door.

"If they think I'm going to tolerate a thing like *this*. . . ." And away he went.

"Did you speak?" asked Uncle, frowning at Mrs. Lucy.

"No, Uncle."

"Did you speak?"

"No."

"What did you say?"

Mrs. Lucy went out to the balcony. She looked up the street and down the street, listened for the strains of the band, came back into the room, let two minutes pass, sighed deeply, went out to the landing and herself peeped through the landing window. To see, under the pear tree in the middle of the garden, Janet and Nathaniel and Mr. Lucy, *all* quarrelling.

"My goodness me!" Mrs. Lucy whispered to herself. "This is dreadful! After all the trouble he's taken!" She hoisted sail and set hand to the tiller. Downstairs and through the kitchen she went, and out into the garden to tell them that really this kind of thing couldn't be allowed . . . it wasn't *nice*. . . .

In the room upstairs Uncle sat waiting, muttering and waiting, asking questions that were not answered, although he didn't know that. And in the middle of the room the Child stood reading. Aloud.

"The immense number of species already discovered, together with the various modes in which they are propa—— propaga—— something—renders this order of vegetable an endless source of delightful observation to the inquiring mind——"

The soul of the Child appeared to be filled with disgust. She closed the book with a snap and threw it back on the table. The table was polished. The book slid in a beautiful curve and stopped; close to grandmama's vase. But when the book stopped grandmama's vase started, and when grandmama's vase stopped it stopped in a hundred pieces on the edge of the carpet.

The Child blinked. It blinked at the hundred pieces. It blinked at uncle. It blinked at the door. And suddenly it wondered why, even without *this*, it was not particularly popular in the household. And then it vanished through the door and down the stairs.

"Penelope Ann! Pen-el-ope A-ann!"

Penelope Ann appeared from the kitchen at the foot of the stairs.

"Brush!" whispered the Child. "Upstairs! I've broken *it*!"

"Oh!" said Penelope Ann.

The Child, being wise, did not stay to go into details.

In the room upstairs Uncle still sat waiting. Alone. Alone, but still conversing.

"I can't hear you. You'll have to speak up. What?"

He grunted.

"No, I don't, and I never did, and I've said so a thousand times before. . . . Who did? *I* did? When?"

He eased up and took a deep breath.

"I said *what*? I can't hear you. . . . You'll have to speak up. I said *what*?"

He turned to his left, indignantly, and was surprised to find that Mr. Lucy was not sitting beside him on his left.

"I said *what*?"

Indignantly he turned to his right. Astonished, he rose and looked round the room.

"Where the hell are you?" he said to the emptiness.

He tottered out to the balcony and came back. He went to the door and opened it.

"Where the hell are you?" he repeated.

He went out.

On the staircase he met Penelope Ann with a brush in her hand. He asked her where the others were and she said, "Oh!" He said, "Why are they?" and went into the kitchen.

And upstairs went Penelope Ann, into the room with the decorated balcony. At the ruins of grandmama's treasured vase Penelope Ann stared stupidly. And on her knees before the ruins Penelope Ann knelt and began work with the brush.

"Oh!" said Penelope Ann.

Far away down William Street, outside the Church Schools, the Important People were getting into their carriages and the Town Band was getting into position. The crowds were beginning to cheer. And then the Very Important People came out and got into *their* carriage, the cheers grew louder and the Town Band struck up.

Penelope Ann sat back on her knees and listened. She scrambled to her feet and went out to the balcony and looked. People were running along the back of the pavement to get to the procession before the procession could get to them. At all the windows were eager faces. Handkerchiefs were waving.

The procession came into sight. First, little boys running and shouting. Then the constable. Then the Town Crier, with his beautiful hat and his bell. Then the Important People, in three carriages with one horse each. Then the Very Important People, in one carriage with two horses. And lastly, more little boys running and shouting, and beggars, and men with penny things to sell. Along William Street it came, past the thick and cheering crowds, past the little houses and shops, so beautifully trimmed for the occasion. The Very Important People were most impressive and the Important People were most impressed.

Away and round the corner to the sea front, where the foundation stone was ready to be laid. Passing, as both Important and Very Important noticed, a house on the left, buried in coloured ribbons and little flags and a long string of bunting with the word PROGRESS; its balcony laid out in the fashion of a grand-stand, with six chairs, five in a row and one importantly in front. With the five empty and the one occupied by a thin little figure in a print dress and a white apron, waving a little white handkerchief, and saying (though this neither Important nor Very Important could hear for the cheering and the noise that the Town Band made):

"Oh!"

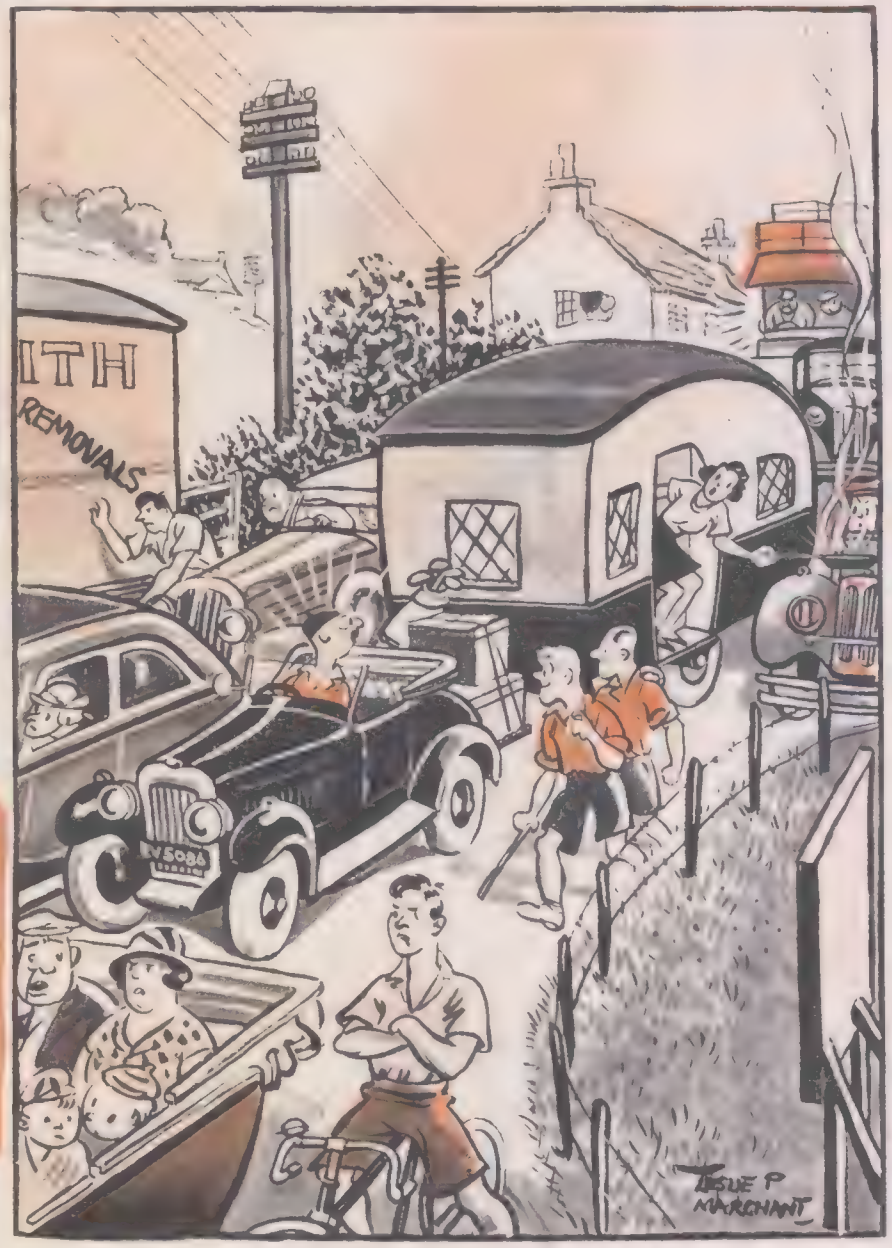
Just "Oh!"

And on the procession went, and away and out of sight.

# Laughter

## The "PASSING SHOW" Smile Section

"We are just rehearsing. My husband has lived so long in the East that he insists upon the servants appearing with dark skins."




"Hey, George! You'd better come and have your lunch while we're in this traffic jam."

"Chief see smoke signal. Want 'um help ?"

"Well, our son's here with your regiment, colonel, so we thought we'd camp here to be near him."

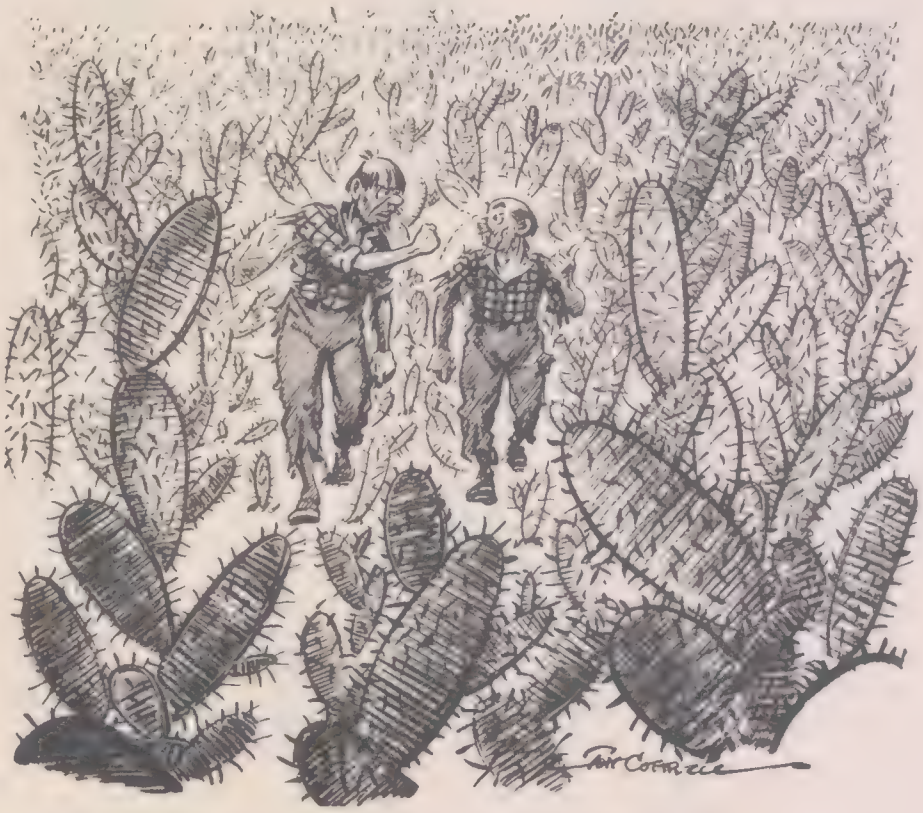
"I must have dropped off to sleep after the show."

"Edith! Edith! Can you throw me another potato?"

## A MAN AWAKES

by A. C. BARRETT

"It's all right, dear, I got him."



"We had one of these at home, in a little pot."

## EMULATION

"Something's wrong, sir. I've sighted land above us!"

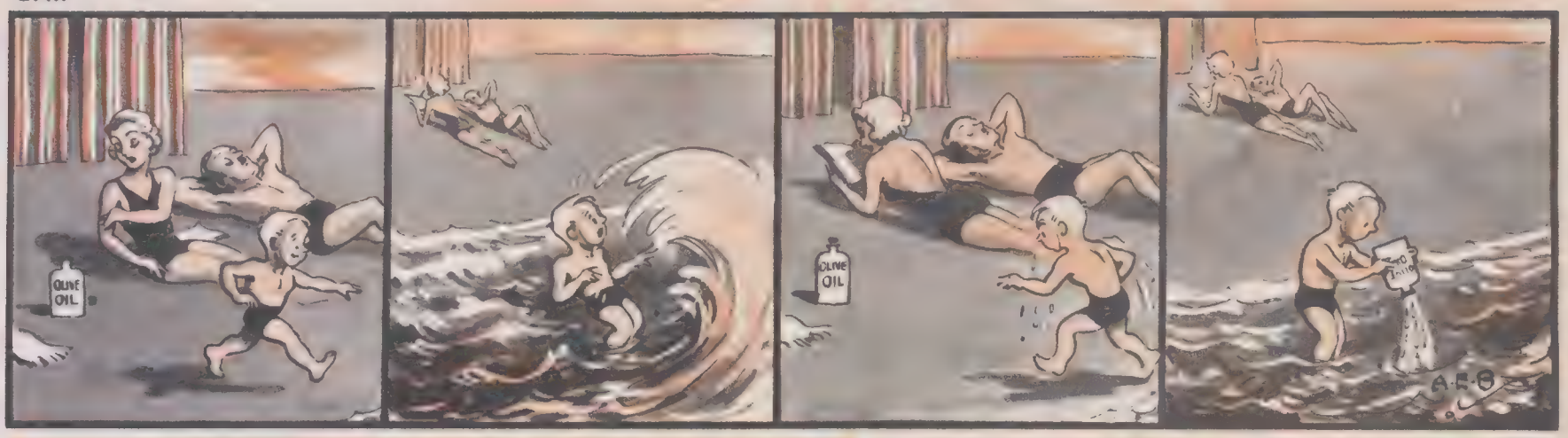
## LAUGH WITH THE WORLD

"How much have you paid off your piano player?"
"Only the five shillings we got for the stool."
*Smith's Weekly*, Sydney.

"How is it you are painting a snow scene?"
"I began in winter and I paint very slowly."
—*Sondagsnisse Strix*, Stockholm

"Er, manager, would you send a smaller waiter here. My husband wishes to make a complaint."—*Das Illustrierte Blatt*, Frankfurt.

CHIP



"Can't you read ?"

Oh! Yes-you'll soon learn them there swim strokes-
Good gell! An' that's swell-an' you've got 'em!"
He didn't know
Me jolly ole toe
Was doing it's stuff on the bottom!

OLD BILL and BERT — by BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER

*Continuing 'Life Before the Wicket'*

*by*

# Herbert Sutcliffe

# Knocking 'em for SIX

Don Bradman "is undoubtedly the outstanding figure in sport—A scientific wonder"

DURING my cricket career I have associated with scores of stars in the cricket world. Being a post-war cricketer, as far as first-class cricket is concerned, I cannot boast of having played against Dr. W. G. Grace, who has been lauded as the best cricketer ever, but I am really proud to have played with and against such players as Hirst, Rhodes, Tyldesley, J. T. Ranji, Fry, Spooner and Sharpe, whose deeds on the cricket-field will live for ever.

As a boy I read of these famous players and I could be excused for standing spellbound when eventually I was introduced to those who had been looked on for years as "supermen." I am going to deal with performances of players of the past. With all due respect I believe they are only fully appreciated by those old cricket enthusiasts who actually saw their performances. Deeds of a sportsman like the deeds of a politician are soon forgotten.

Schoolboys of to-day think little of Hobbs' miraculous performances. They have probably heard that Hobbs was the best batsman in the world for many years. But it is the deeds of Bradman, Verity, Mitchell, Hammond, Grimmett, O'Reilly and Larwood that interest the young enthusiast; it is the present and in a lesser degree the future that counts; therefore, I intend, with a few exceptions, to deal with "cricketers of to-day."

The science of batting and bowling has changed considerably since the war, and whenever I hear foolish old diehards express the opinion that present-day cricket is of a much lower standard than in their day, and that no current cricketer is to be compared with the old stars, I turn away in disgust for I realise how futile it is to compare players of different generations.

Thank goodness there are men such as Lord Hawke, Hirst and Rhodes left behind who realise that cricket to-day is every bit as good if not better than in their palmy days. Few of the old fossils in England can be persuaded that they were *not* superior to the player of to-day, but these persons are usually wind bags. Men who offer scathing criticisms of present-day players and tactics are either men who have never played the game or have played a few minor games for the M.C.C. in what might be termed County House Cricket.

Hobbs has been my "ideal batsman." Although he is now, unfortunately, no longer playing, I feel justified in mentioning his name before that of any other. It is only two years since the Surrey idol ceased to play in first-class cricket, and even at the age of 54 I would that he were given the chance of playing in another dozen games in an effort to complete 200 centuries. It would be a fine gesture on the part of the Surrey club; a gesture that would be hailed with delight by every cricket enthusiast throughout the Empire, and particularly by Surrey supporters. Hobbs has been responsible, in a large degree, for filling the coffers of the Surrey club for many years. A dozen further appearances would prove a great attraction.

Hobbs at his best was superior to Bradman because he proved himself, times without number, the complete master-batsman on every type of wicket, and against every type of bowling, particularly on "glue pots" and against fast bowling. He has proved since his early days that he has always enjoyed the ideal temperament so necessary for outstanding success. It might be argued that he took exception to the short bowling of MacDonald in 1930 and did not relish bouncers of big Bill Bowes in 1932 (both in the Champion County *v.* Rest games), but as Hobbs declared during the former spot of bother, "at the age of 48 I am unable to spot the fast short 'uns quick enough to permit the placing of the feet in the right position for the correct execution of the pull or hook stroke." Hobbs certainly would not have minded that type of bowling a few years earlier.

I can picture Hobbs now facing those two demon bowlers Gregory and MacDonald. A most graceful and comfortable stance, displaying the utmost confidence and determination to succeed, radiating confidence to the whole team. The exactness of his "calling" for runs and above all his glorious batsmanship; a perfect stroke for every ball; each a technical masterpiece with every part of his body working in perfect unison, the whole controlled by a perfect cricket brain.

A great player on any wicket, Hobbs is undoubtedly the best batsman I have ever seen.

Of the batsmen playing first-class cricket to-day, Bradman must surely be hailed as No. 1. His performances during the last few seasons place him in a class to himself; he is undoubtedly the outstanding figure in sport, a scientific wonder. I have seen three innings by Don which he must consider as his best; his 334 in the third test at Leeds in 1930, his 304 in the fourth test at Leeds in 1934, and a festival century at Scarborough.

His relentlessly aggressive and scintillating form in both Tests at Leeds amazed everyone. His ruthless treatment of all bowlers, his lightning footwork and his magnificent stroke play (strokes that are only Bradman's) were a delight, but after the first century we players simply prayed that the busy B. would be quickly despatched to the pavilion. After passing the third century, this run-scoring machine was working perfectly and he appeared to be heading quickly for the 400 mark when his downfall came.

There was an even greater effort in the Scarborough game. Many people will have heard of a very brilliant century scored by Charlie ("D'Artagnan of the crease") Macartney, in the third test at Headingley in 1926. Before Bradman arrived, I considered this performance the best ever on that type of wicket, but though Bradman's two big scores were not so brilliant as Macartney's quick hundred, they were, nevertheless (taken over such a long period) even greater innings

But Bradman's super-century at the Scarborough Festival in 1934 was a thrilling affair. From the first ball to the last he made a shot at nearly every ball, and what a shot it was; perfect wrist work and perfect timing saw ball after ball travel as fast as a cannon ball to thud with terrific force against the boundary pickets. The rapturous applause and enthusiasm accorded Bradman during his knock and on his return to the pavilion was ample testimony to a great innings that is talked of to-day as the best innings played since the war. I will go as far as to say that no pre-war cricketer could have produced a finer effort.

With all due respect to Don's greatness on a perfect wicket and against ordinary good length bowling of all types, I must confess that he, like the majority of the leading batsmen of the day, does not exactly relish a fast, rising ball. One would have expected that Don with his ultra quick eye and footwork would have had much more time than any other batsman to place the short ball in safety and with profit.

Australian batsmen so seldom play on a sticky wicket that it is only to be expected they should fall below the standard attained by English batsmen. I have seen Bradman play on a bad wicket on four occasions. On each occasion he has failed to score more than a dozen runs; I hope that in the future I shall be allowed to see Don in action on a vile wicket for at least two hours, so that I might be able to judge his capabilities.

Now to the present day foremost batsman of England — Walter Hammond, whose performances in Australia during the 1928/9 tour stamped him as the best "bat" in the world. But a player cannot expect to hold that honour because of one season alone. Hammond has undoubtedly disappointed many of his followers by his recent failures, particularly during the Australian tour of England in 1934, but there need be no qualms in regard to Wally Hammond's skill.

Like Bradman, he does not care for fast bowling, particularly of the short length type. Australians noticed this in 1932/3, and 1934, for whenever Wally appeared, Wall was put on to bowl. Hammond is far too good a batsman to permit this state of affairs to continue.

Turning to bowling, I find myself faced with the unenviable task of selecting the best fast bowler I have played against. Gregory, MacDonald, Larwood or Bowes; what a wonderful combination of Australian and England bowlers!

Although both the Australian speed merchants have retired from first-class cricket I can still remember most vividly the wonderful rhythmic run of Jack Gregory hurling himself through the air with the grace of a kangaroo, yet with the aggression of a lion. I can still picture the most graceful of all fast bowlers, MacDonald, every muscle working in perfect harmony in a fast long run that culminated in a fascinating delivery—a delivery superior to any I have ever experienced—a delivery in which the supple wrist of that fine bowler was seen to the best possible advantage.

While not nearly so fast as either, Big Bill Bowes can, on English wickets, make the ball "move" far more than any fast bowler I have experienced, and he is a real danger to any batsman, particularly the opening pair. Whenever there is a lively wicket, Bowes with his accurate length is capable of disposing of the best international team for a mediocre score.

But my choice for the best fast bowler is Harold Larwood. It is hard to judge the speed of two exceptionally fast bowlers, but I do honestly believe that Larwood is slightly faster than Gregory was, and in making this statement, I refer to both bowlers at their best.

Larwood's speed in Australia was undoubtedly faster than Gregory's, for his low trajectory caused the ball to skid through much quicker than the taller bowler. It is uncanny how such a small fellow as Larwood can produce such speed. Coupled with his terrific speed, he is able to command a superb length and can, at will, make the ball move either way.

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# Legacy *Murders*

## *by* Francis Beeding

### THE STORY SO FAR

VALERIE BEAUCHAMP, best-seller novelist, is murdered four days after her discovery that she has been hoaxed by fellow-members of a literary society, the Esoterics, into believing that one of her readers has fallen in love with her. Even though she was demented on hearing that the Esoterics had read her passionate love letters, her will shows she has left £200 to each of them—Councillor Joshua Stanton, Edward Calcott, who was the bogus lover, Frederick Reeves, Adelaide Tring, Naomi Garnett, and Cyril Sidebotham—and, if any of them dies, his income is to be shared by the others.

The spotlight of the story moves to Marseilles, where a strange little man is furtively buying arsenic and a revolver. Then Adelaide Tring is poisoned. Lavinia Brown, companion to Miss Beauchamp, tells the police that Fred Reeves is the killer, but he is shot dead by a man who jumps on the running board of his car as soon as Sergeant Wilks and Inspector Martin of Scotland Yard begin to investigate the accusation. While the remaining members of the Esoterics live in dread, wondering who will be the next victim, Inspector Martin follows Lavinia Brown on a midnight visit to the grave of the murdered novelist, watching her hide an automatic pistol under a rose bush. He decides to arrest her when he hears that the gun did not fire the bullet that killed young Reeves. The mysterious man from Marseilles buys a knife and Edward Calcott's cook takes revenge for being dismissed by accusing him of being involved in the murders.

THE official of Flying Services Limited looked sympathetic but not encouragingly at Peter Doubleday, a crime reporter investigating the Highwood murders.

"Sorry, sir, but you telephoned too late. The two Jersey 'planes, both regular and reserve, are quite full. That is the best we can do for you."

He pointed, as he spoke, to a small 'plane, yellow and white, which was used, Peter understood, for local joy-riding.

"I'll take it," said Peter.

Five minutes later he was in the air—back again, after his small set-back, with the question that had been exercising his mind continually for the last three or four hours. *Come at once—very urgent, but don't worry.* Such was the telegram he had that morning received from Daphne, and it was not the sort of message to be received calmly by a young husband whose devotion was notorious. His wife, moreover, was staying with her aunt in Jersey, and to come at once was easier said than done. Nevertheless here he was, flying on the wings of love.

It was the Saturday before Whit Monday and he was up to his neck in the murder case of the century. The *Daily Wire*, however, was not published on Sunday and on Whit Monday it ran a series of holiday stunts which, unless something very sensational occurred, might be expected to push even the Highwood cases into the background.

Should he, perhaps, before leaving have rung up Inspector Martin? Willows, of course, was not in favour of communicating with the Yard until there was something definite to go upon, but Peter had his misgivings. Willows did not believe in Mr. Jacob Teesdale as a possible suspect, but Peter had begun to feel it was time the police were warned to keep an eye upon that very odd pensioner of Lavinia Brown who lived at Islip Mansions and had a pet camera to whom, in pride and affection, he had given the name of Ananias.

Scotland Yard had become very reticent of late, but surely the best way to elicit information was to offer something in exchange, and Inspector Martin might be very glad to hear of Jacob Teesdale. It had been officially announced that no further developments were yet to be expected in connection with the deaths of Adelaide Tring and Frederick Reeves. The Yard, in fact, confessed itself baffled. That, of course, might be policy and not a genuine admission of defeat. The Yard might really know a good deal more than it allowed, and in that case might be ready to drop a useful hint to a useful person in return for services rendered.

Peter awoke from his not very lucid meditations. The noise of the aeroplane was suddenly hushed. The engine, in fact, was slowing down. Had they reached the journey's end? Peter looked over the side. A thin fog drifted above the Channel and no land was anywhere in sight. The engine coughed and spluttered. The pilot was busy with his dashboard and the steady hum of the engine began again. But only for a moment—and suddenly it died away altogether in three choking sighs.

The plane tilted downward again. The pilot turned sharply round to him.

"Lifebelts are under the seat," he said tersely.

His face was chalk-white, but his mouth was steady.

"Put on the belt!" he snapped.

Peter wrapped the lifebelt hastily round him and looked through the window. They were now very close to the sea. The pilot was still fingering his controls, but the engine gave no sign of life.

"Rip the panel!"

The pilot was pointing upwards to a circular opening in the roof an inch or two above Peter's head, covered with some thin, transparent substance. A leather tag hung down.

Peter seized it and pulled.

There came a tearing sound and at the same moment a violent shock, a splash, the hiss and roar of water.

Peter was flung violently forward and sideways into thick darkness.

When he opened his eyes, he found himself staring at a rectangle of dirty, white-painted wood, a few inches above his head. There was a band round his forehead. He put up his hand and a voice said something in his ear—something quite unintelligible.

Someone appeared to be hammering. Or was the hammer in his head? He sighed and shut his eyes again. Perhaps the hammering would stop. No, it was worse. He opened them again. He turned his head a little. What on earth was happening? He was lying in a sort of wooden trough and a dirty blanket was tickling his chin.

Again the voice was speaking.

Peter turned a fraction of an inch. A face which flickered strangely was beside his own—a dirty face with stubble round the chin and a mouth that spoke unintelligible words. A hand came forward. It held an enamel mug to his mouth. He drank and, as he drank, memory came back to him.

He had fallen into the sea. He had been picked up. He was in a boat.

There came footsteps and another face.

"You Eenglish, yes?" said the voice.

"Yes," said Peter eagerly.

"You nearly dead man, mister. But all right now."

"Where is the pilot?"

"No understand."

"The pilot," Peter repeated slowly. "He was with me in the aeroplane."

"No aeroplane. All gone. Finished."

The little man with the dirty face and the pair of twinkling black eyes was beside him.

"We pick you up. All alone."

"Good God, where am I?" said Peter.

"This is Greek ship, *Themistocles*. Outward bound for Sydney."

"For Sydney?"

"You must not speak. You lie down and go sleep."

"Did you say for Sydney?"

ILLUSTRATED BY
JACK M. FAULKS

The dark cabin with its dirty, white-painted wood above his head, was beginning to whirl.

"Listen," he said earnestly. "I must send a message."

The face with the twinkling eyes shook from side to side..

"Not possible, mister. This very small sailing ship, *Themistocles*. No, there is no wireless."

But Peter did not hear. The cabin had suddenly assumed the proportions of a vast hall, shadowy and remote.

Then for a second time came oblivion.

"No good, mister. We cannot go back now. You have been without any wits for four days."

Peter was sitting up in his bunk.

"You mean that you can't take me back to England?"

The little man with the black eyes was, it appeared, the captain himself, and the only one who could speak any English on board. He shook his head.

"No, mister. I can't put back after four days. Quite out of question."

"You mean that I must come with you to Sydney?"

"No other hope, mister."

"When do we make it, Captain?"

"Perhaps ninety days. Perhaps a hundred. Not less than ninety days."

"Good God."

"Sorry, mister. You very welcome to bunk all that time. Very sad fate, but no remedy."

Councillor Stanton, turning away from his house, set his face resolutely towards the country. Nothing should make him change the custom of years. Exercise and supervision. Both were necessary. The first was merely personal. Exercise was good for the figure. The second was a public duty, and to-day it was not in conscience to be avoided. It was one of his most cherished habits to walk through the woods on a public holiday.

As a member of the local Bench and as a Councillor he felt responsible for the condition and good name of the district. The woods, moreover, lay near his door. Honour and propriety should begin at home, and for many years he had resolutely set his face against the licence which was apt to prevail in public places where nature—and more particularly human nature—still contrived to flourish and grow wild.

It would, he thought, prove a welcome distraction to his mind to follow his familiar routine. Making the rounds, as he called it, would take him out of the world of horrors in which he had been wandering for the last three weeks.

Barely three weeks. Was it possible that only that short while ago Valerie Beauchamp had been sitting in her house, as he had so often seen her, just finishing a chapter? She had always been just finishing a chapter. But now she was lying in a wooden box in Highwood Cemetery and two of those who had plotted against her peace were as poorly lodged.

He looked about him nervously as he breasted the rise towards the woods.

Was it wise to be walking thus alone? He quickened his steps towards the lights and flares and clamour of the fair which was being held. Soon he would be lost in the crowd—as safe there as in his own house and among his own people.

He saw no one in the quiet street that led from his home. Or was that someone who followed him? He looked back. A man in a blue suit had stopped to light his pipe.

Soon he emerged upon the high and crowded causeway. He stood a moment looking at the crowds. A boy blowing a tin trumpet cannoned against him. Councillor Stanton brushed him aside. A party of girls and women advanced upon him, seven abreast, singing and shouting. One of them tickled his face with a feather, and when he drew himself up in offence, her companions broke their line and, forming a ring, danced about him in a circle. Looking for a way of escape, he again caught sight of the man in the blue suit standing on the outskirts of the crowd and there, thank heaven, was a policeman.

"Pass along there. Pass along."

The ring scattered and Councillor Stanton continued on his way.

A coster shouted at him.

"Make way, guv'ner. Give us a chawnse."

The man was leading his donkey and in the cart behind was perched the coster's wife. Her jacket was sewn all over with buttons and she wore a great plume in her hat.

"Blimey, 'Arry, it's a toff," she screamed in high delight, as she caught sight of Stanton's dinner-jacket beneath the light coat he was wearing.

Her conductor gave a shout of good-humoured derision.

"That ain't no bloomin' toff," he announced with a tremendous contortion of the face at Stanton, intending to proclaim good fellowship. "That's the 'ead waiter escaped from the Carlton."

Councillor Stanton swerved aside to the pavement and, as soon as he was out of the coster's range of vision, he turned up the collar of his overcoat and buttoned it so that the white shirt should no longer be visible.

Soon he left the road altogether and descended through the woods towards the fair. The place was alive with figures and, under the naphtha lights of a stall, he was accosted merrily by two bouncing girls, without hats and with very flushed faces; they laid hold of him in the friendliest fashion.

"Hullo, dearie, all alone?" said one of them.

"Be a sport," said the other.

"We 'ave 'eard," said the first, "as there's a pub in these parts."

"Name of the 'Cat and Fourpence,'" supplemented the second.

"Let me go," said Councillor Stanton firmly.

"Come on," repeated the first girl. "Be a sport."

"Certainly not, young lady," said Councillor Stanton.

"Drop it, Maggie," said the second girl. "It's the Lord Chancellor or something."

"Lord Chancellor," retorted Maggie. "Oh, Gawd, 'e's a wicked old man and I'm not going to 'ave nothing to do with 'im. Mother wouldn't like it."

The girls ran off, shrieking with laughter, leaving Councillor Stanton trembling with indignation. Things were getting worse instead of better. He had made the rounds for more years than he cared to remember, but this was the first time he had been actually assaulted. There was no kind of discipline or decency left in the world, a reflection which drove effectively from his mind all sense of his private worries. He would go home and compose a strong letter to the *Highwood Gazette*. How many of these people would be up before him as a result of these unspeak-

(*continued on next page*)

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# *Continuing* The Legacy Murders

able doings? Retribution should be swift and as severe as the law allowed.

He passed the firing stall and perceived ahead of him swings whirling up and down, full of screaming occupants. Ordinarily he approved of swings. They were a harmless diversion. Nothing much could happen in a swing. But to-night the shouting got upon his nerves and he turned aside into a small path leading to a thicket of trees.

The path took a sharp bend to the right near the thicket, and, as he turned with the path, he received a bump in the chest and his hat fell off.

"Sorry, mister," said a voice in his ear.

The girl who had run into him was rather breathless. She seemed in a fine disorder and her breath smelled of spirits.

"You should really be more careful," protested Councillor Stanton, as he stooped to retrieve his hat.

"No offence, guv'ner."

The voice above him was hoarse and harsh and the Councillor rose to confront a huge man with a muffler, which did duty for collar and tie, and pearl buttons sewn sparsely over a dark coat.

"Sorry," repeated the girl.

"All right, all right," said Councillor Stanton testily, replacing his hat. "That's enough, that's quite enough."

The coster looked at him with increasing disfavour.

"You speak civil to my young lady," he said suddenly.

"Drunk," thought Councillor Stanton.

"I only asked your young lady to be more careful where she was going," he said mildly.

"Tryin' to teach my young lady manners, was you—you great big stiff."

"Look here, young man."

"Tryin' to teach my young lady manners," repeated the coster, working himself up. "I'll be teaching you something you'll not forget, if you're not above taking a lesson, you old beast."

"How dare you speak to me like that or anybody else in a public place!" said the Councillor indignantly.

The huge coster came right up to him and the world was obscured by a fist like a leg of mutton. The Councillor threw up his arm and brusquely brushed the fist aside.

"You would, would you?"

The fist receded, but came back quickly. Councillor Stanton took the blow on his chin and shot backwards into a clump of bushes.

"You didn't ought to 'ave 'it 'im, Bill."

"That's for 'is interference," came the hoarse voice as from a great distance.

"Come orf 'im, Bill. Beat it quick—before the coppers come."

"That'll teach 'im to treat a lady proper."

The harsh voice died away.

Councillor Stanton stirred and put a trembling hand to his jaw. Could it be broken?

What was that? A face was bending over him as he lay among the bushes—a white face with tortoiseshell spectacles. The mouth was set in a thin line.

"Number Three," said the thin lips.

Councillor Stanton opened his eyes wide.

"God . . ." he began.

A clean, cold pain about his heart checked his words. The sky above his head, pricked with early stars, fluttered like a flag in the wind.

Then darkness fell and he knew no more.

"My son is not at home, Inspector." Inspector Martin, on the doorstep of No. 255 High Street, hesitated a moment.

"Can you tell me when he will be back, Mrs. Calcott?" he asked.

"It's difficult for me to say," she replied. "I never quite know when Edward will be back again."

Inspector Martin considered the situation.

"Shall I ask him to ring you up, Inspector, when he returns?" Mrs. Calcott suggested hopefully.

Martin shook his head.

"No, thank you, Mrs. Calcott. I will ring him up myself later."

He walked away from the house and slowly back towards the woods.

So Edward Calcott, as he suspected, was at large. Not altogether at large. Constable Woodstock, detailed to follow him, would be close at his heels wherever he might be.

He turned the corner of the road.

What did this mean? Constable Woodstock, attired as one of the respectable black-coated workers of the world, was coming towards him. The man was walking quickly and there was a flush on his cheeks.

"Seen him, sir?" he gasped.

"Seen who?" said Martin abruptly and regardless of grammar.

"Sorry, sir, but I'm afraid I've lost him," said the constable. "Gave me the slip, sir."

Martin looked at the agitated constable.

"When was that?"

"Half an hour ago, sir."

"Was it an accident or did he throw you off deliberately?"

The constable scratched his head.

"Might have done it with intention, sir, or again he might not."

"How did it happen?"

"Highwood Tube Station, sir. He went down in the lift and got on the train. I followed him into it. Then, just before they closed the door, he stepped out on to the platform again. It was too late for me to get off after him and I was carried on to the next station."

Martin pursed his lips.

"It looked as though he had spotted you, constable."

Constable Woodstock grinned sheepishly.

"Perhaps he did, sir, but, as I say, I can't be sure of it. You see, sir, just before he stepped off the train, he put his hand to his head as though he had forgotten something, which may have been the case."

"Well, constable, it can't be helped," said Martin. "Go back to his house and report to the station as soon as he comes back."

Martin continued his walk towards the woods. His thoughts were bitter. This was no way to spend his holiday. He had been looking forward to passing it with Elizabeth. They had not been married six months and the new car was still a joy for ever. They had planned to run up to Cromer to see her people and get a breath of sea air.

Assuredly the policeman's lot was not a happy one and there would be no holiday for him till he could show results. There was no use disguising the fact. His whole career was at stake and not only his career but the prestige of the new system. There was more than one of his older colleagues who would not be exactly sorry if he slipped. The new recruits from the Police Training School were not held in any great favour by the more conservative members and there would be no mercy for him if he failed.

He emerged on to the high road and peered about him as he walked. The clamour and movement of the crowd was reassuring, and at another time he would have watched it with amusement and perhaps with envy. The English did not always take their pleasures sadly.

This was the real world—not the dark corners of life in which he probed into its distortions and cruelties.

He descended from the road towards the fair and, as he did so, a shrill cry came to his ears. The crowd, sparsely scattered over the open ground, had come together some fifty yards away. Something had happened—probably one of the numerous incidents which were wont to enliven a public holiday. The crowd had settled like a swarm of bees down in the hollow beside a small thicket.

Martin hastened towards the disturbance. Figures on the outskirts of the moving circle were pressing towards the centre.

A woman, screaming hysterically, dashed towards him, followed by a big man wearing a muffler.

"'Old up, Lizzy," he was saying.

"You didn't ought to 'ave 'it 'im, Bill."

Martin looked sharply at the couple as they passed and then pressed forward. A woman was lying on the ground in a fit of hysterics, but no one paid her the slightest attention. Everyone was pushing towards the centre, some twenty yards away.

He caught sight of the helmet of a policeman showing above the throng. He stepped forward quickly.

"Let me through," said Martin, speaking to right and left.

A man in the crowd, his face working with excitement, turned upon him savagely.

"Who are you," said the man, "shovin' your face in?"

"Scotland Yard," said Martin briefly.

The crowd made way and Martin, reaching the centre, saw at his feet a young constable kneeling over a figure stretched upon the grass. One arm was beneath the head and neck of the fallen man.

"Stand back, there. Stand back. Now then, sir, stand back."

A second constable was addressing him.

Martin showed his warrant card.

"Yard," he said briefly.

The constable saluted.

"Bad business, sir."

Martin dropped on one knee beside the young constable. The victim was in evening dress, covered with a light overcoat which had blown partially aside, disclosing the white shirt front. The edge of the coat was pinned to the starched linen by a knife, the handle of which protruded from the chest.

It was then that Martin saw the face. The mouth was twisted a little and the wide-open eyes were such as he had never seen. But the features were those of Councillor Stanton. Martin rose to his feet.

"Where's your sergeant?" he said to the upright constable.

"He will be here in a moment, sir. I sent for him five minutes ago."

Martin stepped back and looked at the staring crowd, their eyes like those of cattle drawn in a ring about a pool. The excitement had died away. From somewhere on the edge of it came a hard, dry sobbing. Martin turned again to the constable.

"When did this happen?"

"Can't say exactly, sir."

Martin felt a touch on his arm. A man in a blue suit was at his elbow. Martin looked at him steadily.

"Peterson," he said, "what does this mean? You were supposed to be trailing Stanton. How did you come to lose him?"

"I didn't lose him, sir. I had him in view all the time. Leastways right up to the end. He had a bit of a tiff with a coster—along of his young lady running into him. I was watching 'im as ordered, but the coster knocked him into the bushes before I could interfere. I came down from the road to see whether he was hurt, and when I got to 'im 'e was lying as you see 'im now. It wasn't the coster that put the knife into 'im."

"How long was it before you got down to the body?"

"Matter of not more than half a minute, sir, from the time 'e was knocked out."

"You saw nobody?"

"Someone was moving off, sir, matter of thirty or forty yards away, going fast among the trees. I shouted at him to stop, but he had got well into the crowd and it was hopeless to follow."

"A man?"

"That's all I could see—except that he was wearing a black 'at."

"You are quite sure it wasn't the coster?"

"Quite sure, sir. Different build altogether." Martin considered a moment.

"The man that hit Stanton passed me in the crowd a moment ago, Peterson. He should be found and brought in at once. You'd better go to the station and put a call through to the Yard. We must have every available man on the job."

"Very good, sir."

The crowd gave way as Peterson moved off to carry out his instructions. A police sergeant, accompanied by two constables with a stretcher, came forward into the circle. The body was lifted upon the stretcher and a rug was thrown over it.

It was then that Martin, turning to watch the crowd give way to the stretcher-bearers, caught sight of a figure that stood motionless, staring after them. The first thing he noticed was the black hat; the second thing was the face of Edward Calcott, white and strained, beneath it.

NEXT WEEK:
**CHARGED WITH MURDER**

# DON'T *be* TOO SURE *of the* SEASHORE

The seashore is not public property . .

## A *Barrister* explains the law for holiday-makers.

ENGLAND may be the "Land of the Free," but there are many legal restrictions on the holiday-maker in his relations with the railway company that carries him to country or sea, the landlady who houses him and his family and the very sea itself.

Last summer a family party engaged rooms in a town on the South Coast. The landlady had described her house as being "near the sea," and on this assurance accommodation was booked.

Actually, the house was two miles from the sea, and as the exchange of letters was the basis of a contract, the question arose as to whether there had been misrepresentation.

"Near the sea" is a relative term. By it some people might mean a hundred yards; others two miles. This point shows how necessary it is in engaging holiday accommodation to ask in your letter specific questions and insist on specific answers to them. By this you will avoid unpleasantness about alleged misrepresentation, and the unpleasant possibility of county court litigation.

Had the landlady said her house was a quarter of a mile from the sea whereas it was actually one mile, she would have been liable, but a general statement such as "near to" or "not far from" may be interpreted one way or the other.

A person letting lodgings is liable to the tenant if there is any proof of dirt or lack of sanitation.

If, when you take possession of your rooms, you are told that three weeks previously the last tenant died of tuberculosis, you have a right against the landlady who withheld that fact.

You are entitled to leave the rooms and may also, where you can show material loss, recover damages.

Certain conditions are what the law calls implied warranties, and such a thing as cleanliness is among them.

The position of passengers on the railway with regard to accidents is not generally understood. A railway company is not a common carrier, so it is not liable for injuries to passengers unless such injuries are due to its own neglect. Even where facts show that both passenger and company are to blame, the company has no liability.

Claims brought by passengers against railway companies fail so frequently because they are not well founded.

In the case of special excursion tickets, the company limits its liability by printing on the back of the ticket the conditions on which it carries passengers. These conditions protect the Company.

Now as to luggage. The railway company is liable for passenger's luggage lost or damaged unless it is made clear that the goods are carried at the owner's risk. If you carry your own luggage into your compartment, it is your responsibility.

It is important to remember that the Company's liability is only for personal luggage. For example, a suitcase containing clothing is included; a typewriter, or even a sewing-machine is not. In one case the courts held that a 'cello was not personal luggage, because the passenger, being a professional musician, carried the instrument as a tool of his trade.

If you travel by railway and place in your luggage things of great value, for example, a chinchilla fur, or jewellery, and so forth, the loss falls on you and not on the Company *unless*, before starting you declare your valuables to the excess luggage office and pay the additional charge on their carriage.

## Passing Slips

*Half a crown will be paid to the sender of each "Slip" published. Actual cuttings must be sent. If more than one reader submits the same "Slip" prize will be awarded to first opened. Address "Slips," PASSING SHOW, 31 Bow Street, London, W.C.2.*

**Something Wrong.**—"At Ross Police Court yesterday Major R. W. Allen (chairman) on behalf of the Royal Society for the *Preservation* of Cruelty to Animals handed a bronze medal and certificate to Alfred Jones."—*Birmingham Gazette.*

**Tommy Atkins Again.**—"The Japanese authorities have presented a demand to the British Embassy for the prompt investigation of the death of the *Japanese Army* for which, they allege, a British soldier was responsible."—*Bristol Evening Post.*

**Secret Drinkers, Beware!**—"'I thought I did not have to be accompanied,' was stated to have been said to a police constable by a woman who was fined £1 for *drinking* without the supervision of a second person while holding a provisional licence."—*Romford Recorder.*

**'Ware Cannibals.**—"My reader tells me that over there it is the custom to serve *customers* in the same way that we serve vegetable marrow here."—*Weekly Scotsman.*

**The Human Fish.**—"He filled his deep lungs with *air* as soon as the *sea had closed over his head.*"—*Triumph.*

There is an idea that the foreshore is public and that anybody may bask, boat, bathe, fish or swim from the shingle. But this is not so. It is true that it is always legal to sail, swim or fish in our coastal waters, but it is not always legal to put off from the shore, or to land on it.

This arises from the fact that only the foreshore between high and low-water mark is Crown property, and therefore free to the public. There are large stretches of coastal property owned, along with the foreshore, by private landowners. The public has no right to such foreshore.

When holiday-makers are informed that the foreshore is private, they have no legal right to remain on it, however hard it may seem. Landowners have frequently taken action in the courts against the infringement of their proprietary right to the foreshore, and courts always uphold these rights as they would the right of the private possession of a park or garden.

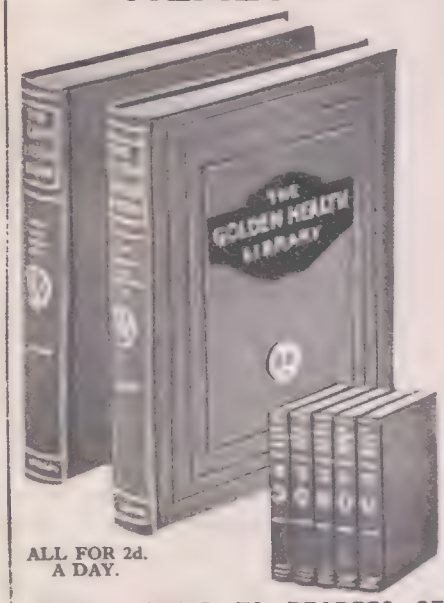
The owner of the foreshore rights is sometimes the owner of a stretch of foreshore popular with holiday makers. For example, the foreshore rights of that stretch of coast between Ramsgate and Sandwich belongs to the Earl of Guildford. He has at odd times, levied tolls on holiday-makers, and in doing so has been well within his legal rights. But even where the foreshore is Crown owned, the public has access to it only by concession.

It is more than a hundred years since judges decided the public had no right of access to the foreshore. They reasoned that, if the public has the *right*, then the Government would be without access to the foreshore when it was needed for national purposes, for the building of naval docks, or harbours or other defence works. As it is obviously the right of the Government to do all these things, the public's use of the foreshore is not a legal right.

Nowadays, the rapidly increasing number of privately-owned aircraft has brought with it the problem of the air trespasser. If you are an owner-pilot you become a trespasser without landing your machine if you fly over those areas prohibited by the Air Ministry. Because many people object to the noise and the possible danger, the question of air trespass over private land has arisen from time to time, but it is no trespass to fly at a reasonable height over private property.

While the majority of holiday-makers avoid these legal problems, the number would be even smaller were the points I have enumerated borne in mind. Most of them are covered by two non-legal qualities—good manners and common sense.


AN ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF HEALTH

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# A Jealous Wife's Confession

"I KNEW my husband's affection was cooling off. At 20 I had a pretty face and fresh, clear skin. But housework and bringing up two children soon brought lines and wrinkles. At 30 I could easily have been taken for 40. Then I read about the amazing discovery of Biocel by some great doctor in Vienna, which enables women to get back their youthful looks. I got a jar of Biocel Skinfood at once, and used it that night. The very next morning my skin seemed to be fresher and clearer. In a week my husband said: 'Why, Emily, you actually look younger.' In a month all my friends were commenting on the change in my appearance."

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# Dream of

As they look into the future do they share the visions of Mrs. Mitchison's brave new world?

FOR the last thirty or forty years we in Western Europe, and especially England, have been trying the experiment of putting off marriage until fairly late. Our great grandmothers married at sixteen and even our mothers felt that an "old maid" of thirty was probably doomed to childlessness.

Nowadays it is rare for middle-class girls to marry before the twenties, and often enough a bride has had ten or fifteen years out of the parental home and may have an interesting career behind her already.

This has been due partly to economic difficulties, and partly to the fact that women have demanded lives of their own and have at least been in a position to get them.

More and more girls are getting a higher education and won't have it interrupted, and the professions they can enter are so interesting that marriage is no way out or temptation; one pities one's school friends who have succumbed to life in the suburbs and a round of shopping and pram-pushing.

Now it is about time that we considered this experiment quite calmly; we must ask ourselves whether it has had all the advantages, both for ourselves and for the community, that the feminist pioneers told us it would have. Certainly it has enabled worth-while work to be done by women, in all the arts, in science and medicine, in architecture, public health and other services, in research—in all branches of civilised life (except, thank goodness, the armed forces, for we haven't taken to organised killing yet).

It has made a far pleasanter and healthier social life, in which unmarried men and women can meet and talk without having to think in terms of sex all the time.

And it has meant that when two people decided to marry they were both likely to have some knowledge of the world and themselves; they had thought the matter out and could be determined to make a good job of their new venture. These late marriages might have a quality of grave happiness and mutual respect and consideration which was a new thing in the world.

But that is only one side of the experiment. It has also meant that some of the women who were most worth while to the community never marry at all; their work became too fascinating and engrossing to admit the change of even the most considerate of marriages—for it cannot be denied that marriage is bound to make far more work for the wife, and, above all, it gives her a different and definitely worse position.

With her change of name she loses prestige and a certain professional consideration, which may matter a lot to her. Thus, these women's potential children are lost to the community; and on the mother's side the race continues from the slightly less intelligent stocks.

Again, when women marry late, they probably have fewer children, and they usually find themselves less well adapted

# To-morrow

## WOMAN to WOMAN

by Naomi Mitchison

to child-bearing, not only physically but also mentally. As children grow up it is much less fun for them to be with ageing parents, although it is good for them to be with sensible, intellectual and artistic people.

The older mother is more apt to fuss; she can't be quite matter-of-fact over her children—they are more of a surprise. If she has had to give up an interesting job, as only too often she has had to do, she may concentrate too much on the new job of the child, making it too thoroughly the centre of the universe.

When the children grow older—old enough for schools and a life of their own in turn, what happens to the mother? Her occupation is gone and she tries to go back to her old kind of life. But here things are against her. It is very hard to go back to a profession if once you have dropped out of it for a few years. And probably one can't give it full time even so.

There is professional jealousy to contend with, and the general feeling that "we can't have these married women butting in here." The whole social system is against the older woman who tries to give it her intelligence at the time, between 35 and 45, when she is probably at her best mentally.

What is the alternative? The alternative involves a social system that will allow and encourage early marriage. It will allow it economically by giving young couples security not only to marry on but also to have children on, and it will encourage it socially by showing marriage to girls not as something that will cut them off and stop them from having lives of their own, but as the preliminary to careers that they will have ample time to think about and plan. It *must* mean security for the young and re-education for women when they have finished the immediate care of their young children

Let me describe this new society for you. It will mean really early marriage, for the girls at seventeen or eighteen, for the boys not much older. Many girls nowadays would be quite glad to marry then (or even younger) *if* it didn't mean sacrificing all hope of education and a life of one's own.

They are often restless, unable to do good intellectual work—nature is calling them : but they mustn't answer in present conditions, on pain of losing all that their intelligences have shown them may exist. But in my society they could answer.

Then, for a few years, at their physically strongest, they could live the life of the body with their young mates, bearing and nursing children, without economic fear, and putting up with the inevitable discomfort and pain and general mess and muddle at an age when anyhow these things can be taken lightly—when one can be perfectly happy between times—the age at which nowadays one can let oneself be knocked about at football or hockey and be all right next day.

It is easier, too, at that time in one's life, to co-operate; one is not too set in one's ideas to feel one can't send one's own precious darling to the nursery school, and there'll be plenty of clinics and nursery schools and crêches just as soon as women really demand them in the way that these young folk who still want some fun outside the home will do !

The children will grow with young parents, able to play with them and match them at their own games; they will go off on their own. And then will come the great time for the mothers, the years of re-education for the profession which by this time they know must be theirs.

The home, as we know it, must break up, or rather become a holiday home for the family group if it wants to come together (and I believe there will be many more joint holiday groups this way). The mother mustn't be stuck giving orders to the cook or cooking herself.

She must be completely free, and in every way; an early marriage is sometimes good for a lifetime, but quite often husband and wife grow in different directions, and by middle life are better apart—though I would always have them good friends, as why should they not be?

And now the mothers start their re-education in universities that will be different from those of to-day just because the present ones deal with immature boys and girls, and have to be partly schools and places of discipline. There will be nothing of the sort in these later ones, which will deal with mature minds who are really out to learn.

People's actual capacity for mastering a new subject, for concentration, for getting down to it, is usually higher in middle age. They are not distracted by all the things that pull at us in youth. I foresee that the teaching in these new universities will be far more condensed, needing a better standard of teaching but at the same time providing infinitely more interest for the teacher.

Two years of this re-education would be equal to four years of adolescent university work, and then the mothers would be equipped. They would go out, free, to start their next phase of life at thirty-five.

Professions would be arranged for their entrance at this age, and with this equipment; a high degree of professional integrity would be demanded of them; they would be expected to put their work first. There would be holidays, and then what meetings there would be between such mothers and their children—what inspiration, what deep and fundamental things to talk and plan.

It would alter everything. It would make a new outlook between men and women, a new kind of respect. It would save the intelligent woman from the terrible strain of choosing between her work and this other life that is the way of nature; instead, she would be given a pattern of existence in which both things were possible, and both had honour. For the re-educated women would see to it that their sisters and daughters in the first stage of life were treated as whole and valuable personalities, and not ever as mere appendages of a husband.

And the children would grow with a different idea of their mothers; there would be no more "poor old Mummy" who has to be looked after and cosseted and quite often lied to; instead, there would be someone to look forward intensely to seeing—someone who could really be talked to and would really help, someone "grown-up" yet part of the living world, the kind who might really be trusted to run things and not make a mess of them. The new women !

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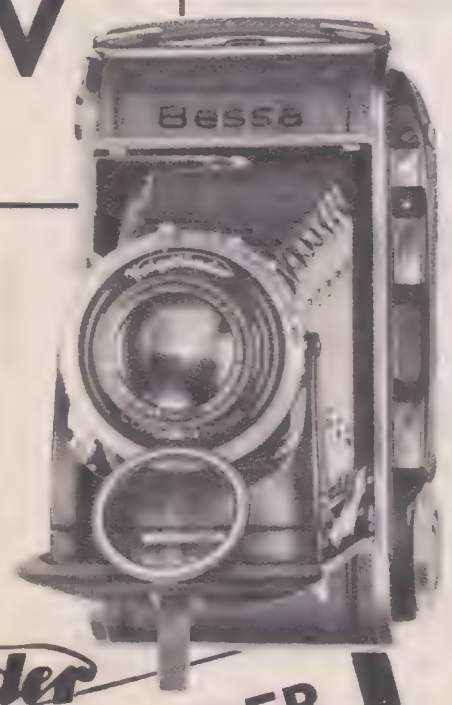


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● "This news about my husband. It can't be true. Surely it can't be true."

*Short Story*

# CHEQUE-MATE

*Financial hurricane makes heroes of both father and son*

*by* Simpson Stokes

EVE had been watching at the bedroom window. As soon as Burt turned the corner into the avenue she ran down stairs and opened the front door. Confident though she had been all day, she felt a momentary sick feeling of anxiety as Burt opened the garden gate. He was looking down at the latch, fumbling, when she first saw him. But as he raised his head and perceived her on the threshold, he smiled a wide smile and raised his right hand.

Thank God, she breathed, and it was as if the evening sunshine had become brilliant. The geraniums bordering the path flamed; the green of their leaves started into vividness; the shabby attache case her husband carried looked suddenly new.

"You got it all right?"

"Yes, dear. Never a doubt of it."

They kissed and went into the hall. He hung his bowler hat on the stand and patted the bald expanse on top of his head with a handkerchief. Then he put the attache case, as he always did, exactly in the middle of the sham Jacobean chest, and followed Eve into the dining-room.

"Oh, Burt! Isn't it lovely? Won't Willie be glad! Did Mr. Pradwick make any fuss?"

"Not a great deal, dear. He was rather surprised at the amount, though, and couldn't understand why I wanted it in cash before the morning."

She noticed how shaky his voice was.

"Poor Burt! It must have been anxious for you. But it's all right now, isn't it? How lucky for you it was Mr. Pradwick you had to deal with instead of Mr. Murden."

"Oh, if it had been Mr. Murden it would have meant a certain refusal," he said. "Is Willie home yet?"

"Yes. He's upstairs in his bedroom, absolutely quivering to know how you got on. Poor boy. He's quite set his heart on the partnership. He's had no breakfast or lunch, but he'll eat a hearty dinner now; that I'm sure about. If you like to go up and give him the good news, I can be dishing up. There's some lovely Scotch salmon, steamed, and new potatoes."

Eve bustled away, smiling radiantly. Burt ascended the stairs and turned the handle of Willie's door. It was locked, and a momentary fear assailed the father's heart; fear that Willie might have . . . Oh, but that would be too silly! He knocked and cried out: "You there, Willie? Open the door. It is all right, my boy. I have got it."

A great sigh of relief escaped him as he heard the creaking of the bed-springs and the sound of feet shuffling to the door. The sight of the youth's drawn face, red eyes and cringing expression of shame moved him greatly. But he affected a bluff heartiness and held out his hand.

"Shake, Willie," he said. "You have nothing to fear now."

"Did you really get it—all, Father?"

"Sure, my boy, and now let's shut the door and have a quiet talk while mother is serving the dinner."

He sat on the side of the bed while Willie leaned against the cupboard, his hands thrust into his pockets.

"So as soon as we have had dinner, we'll trot over to Mr. Anson's and pay up like men, as we promised, my boy."

There were tears in Burt's eyes as he spoke; tears of thankfulness, for the change in the youth was as sudden as it was striking. His bowed form straightened up; his head lifted, and his voice became stronger—with manliness in it where before it had been abject.

"You've been a brick to me over this, father," he said.

"Mother will never know," supplemented Burt. "Nobody will know but you and I, and, of course, Mr. Anson. Now I shan't lecture you any more about the business. I will just trust you."

At dinner, Mrs. Deans monopolised the conversation.

"Just fancy! Willie being a shareholder in his firm! . . . You'll be junior partner in no time, Willie. . . . Wasn't it good of Mr. Pradwick? . . . such a nice gentleman! I'm going to write such

(*continued on page* 30)

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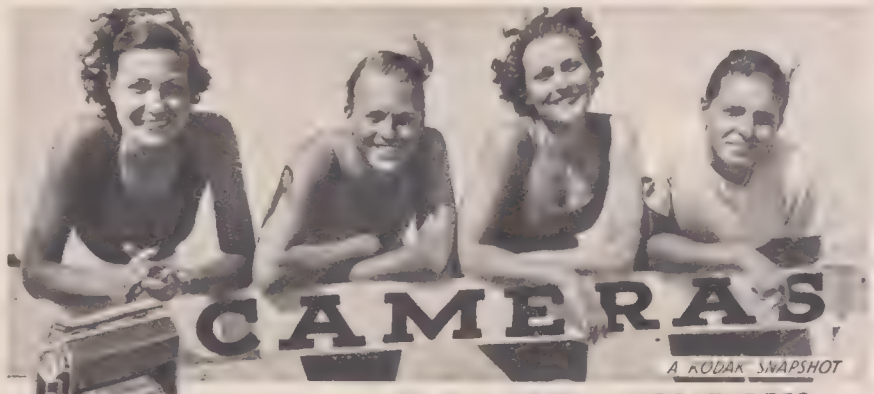


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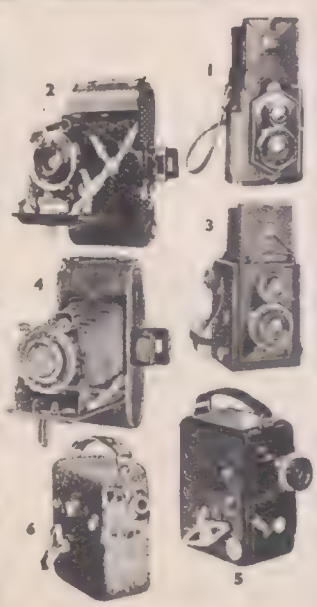


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## *Continuing* CHEQUE-MATE

a long letter to Norah. She'll be the envy of the college when she tells her friends her brother's going to be a big business man. . . . Have some more salmon. . . I do declare it is as fresh as if it had just been pulled out of the river. . . . But we'll have plenty of salmon when Willie is partner. . . . Do have another potato. You see I cooked more than we wanted because they are so nice cold with mayonnaise. . . . Burt! You look quite glum. This ought to be the happiest day of your life. . . ."

Half an hour later, on the wide stone steps of Pillar Hall, Burt squeezed his son's arm encouragingly.

"All over soon, my boy," he said. "Keep your pecker up."

Mr. Anson, whom Burt Deans saw for the first time, proved to be a big, rugged man with a heavy face and intolerant eyes. He strode into the lounge where father and son were awaiting him, nodded sharply to their humble greeting, and would not condescend to shake hands.

He stood before the fireplace with legs apart, twirled his white, aggressive moustache, and waited for Burt to speak.

"I have the money here, Mr. Anson," the father said at last. "It has not been easy, but my boy is worth any sacrifice."

"Well?"

"And now, sir, I hope I have your assurance that this restitution will wipe out—will——"

"I have not yet informed my Board about the affair," said Anson. "Strictly speaking, I ought to do so. I shall have to give careful consideration to it."

"But, sir——" Burt spread out his hands appealingly.

"Honesty is the most vital principle in business," said Anson. "Thieves ought to be instantly dismissed in the first place and then prosecuted—if only as a deterrent to others. You may leave the money with me, but I take charge of it without committing myself to any course of action. I shall give no receipt or acknowledgment. I reserve the right to return it intact or otherwise. If I decide that it will be the best thing to acquaint my Board with the facts, I shall do so. The matter would then rest with them"

Father and son glanced at each other in dismay.

"For heaven's sake, sir, try to put things right for us," Burt pleaded.

"You will please leave the matter to my discretion," Anson interrupted. "The next Board meeting is on the twentieth. I shall do nothing till then. Meanwhile your son can remain with us. If I decide to overlook the matter, I shall say no more. And now I do not see that we can have anything useful to add to our conversation." He pressed a bell-push.

"It will be all right, father," said Willie, as they were returning home. "Mr. Anson's bark is worse than his bite. Besides, he wouldn't have taken the money if he had meant to be nasty. Would he now?"

At the office next morning Burt went about his duties like a man in a dream. Was there no way of making *sure* of Anson? No further appeal to the heart that would make Willie safe from possible prosecution? Suspense built grim black shadows around him. It was the fifteenth of the month. Anson and his co-directors at Willie's firm would meet in cold conclave on the twentieth. Five days—six days—of dread uncertainty, during which Willie's fate trembled in the balance.

Over his coffee after lunch Burt lingered in useless speculation. He had not noticed how the hands of the clock crept round the dial. For once a paragon of punctuality deviated from his practice of twenty-five years. *Mr. Deans half an hour late from lunch* was a major event in the history of Murden & Pradwick Limited.

Burt was roused from his meditation by Wakeling, the office boy, who materialised from nowhere as a small, thin spectre of reality. Wakeling was standing respectfully by the side of Burt's chair in the restaurant—too diffident to speak but anxious to be noticed.

"Sorry, sir," said Wakeling. "But Mr. Murden wishes you to come back at once. A very urgent matter, he said, sir. He's been waiting for over half an hour."

Burt's position of authority enabled him to rally.

"Thank you, Wakeling. You may go. Say I will be back in two minutes."

He called for his bill, paid it, and within the promised time found himself facing Mr. Murden.

A lean, dried-up, saturnine little man, this Murden. Bent back, thin lips, harsh voice, bushy brows, and cold, metallic eyes that sent shivers through a man.

"You've been the deuce of a time, Deans," said Murden, petulantly. "What on earth has come over you?"

Burt licked his dry lips, stared round the room and said nothing.

"Not only to-day, but yesterday, and the day before," complained Murden, smashing his puny fist on to the desk. "Just when I want to go into matters of the utmost urgency, you fail me." He glared at Burt, and his eyes seemed to be not eyes but twin, twinkling pin-points of warning.

Yet Burt felt enormous relief when Murden had finished speaking. His heart stopped thumping; his dry lips were moist again.

"Just now," continued Murden. "When Mr. Pradwick is in Manchester, and likely to stay there for three or four days more, you ought to wait on me hand and foot. You can see I am ill, can't you, man? Cursedly ill. Your own powers of observation ought to have told you so. I can't stick it any longer. My doctor tells me I have to go into a nursing home at once. That may mean surgeons' knives, Deans—operations, while you dilly and dally over your lunch."

Still Burt's soul had a song in it. He thought how splendid it was that Murden was going away; how providential. A special deity must be watching over him. But he tried to look downcast. He said, hypocritically:

"I am so sorry, sir. I didn't realise you were so bad."

"Mr. Anson wouldn't speak to me to-day, father," said Willie. "When I said 'good morning' to him he deliberately looked past me. I can't stand the suspense. I can't." Privately he thought what a precious mess his father had made of the Anson interview. Made a bad impression on old Anson—cringed at him; that's what father had done. Real men never cringed. They stood four-square to the world.

"Don't worry, my boy," said Burt. "I am going to have another shot at him the day after to-morrow. I am certain that I can get him to keep quiet. One more appeal to his better feelings——"

He hasn't got any," said Willie, bitterly. His lately re-won confidence evaporated; the abject look came again into his haunted eyes.

"Neither has Mr. Murden at my place," said Burt. "If I had tried to borrow the money from him I would have got a firm refusal. If I had done anything dishonest, as you did at Anson's, I would have been in prison this very day. But Mr. Pradwick is different. He's a good sort."

*Murden's gone to a nursing home*, sang his joyous heart. *Murden's safely out of the way.*

Eve had been watching at the bedroom window. She had been waiting for Burt to turn the corner into the avenue. It was the evening of the twenty-first. Willie was nearly an hour late. Never happened before. Burt was not home either. Eve was no fool. She had sensed something wrong . . . for the last four days. Some heavy cloud of despondency had hovered over her men-folk.

The evening shadows got deeper and deeper. Surely *one* of them must come. Downstairs she ran—and upstairs again—keeping the dinner warm in the oven, stirring the gravy in a saucepan . . . back to the window again, throbbing with a strange fear.

There came a knock at the door. A tall stranger in a neat suit of blue serge broke the news that "Mr. Deans" had been arrested, but was sure to be out on bail in the morning. Which Mr. Deans? Blue serge destiny indicated Burt. Was very sorry about it; could see what a nice place it was in the avenue; no doubt there was a complete answer to the charge. What was the charge? Forging and uttering a cheque for one hundred and sixty pounds.

Willie came in the middle of it, joyful. Mr. Anson had agreed to overlook his sin. His late arrival home had no connection with blue serge destiny. His mouth sagged open when he heard the news. So father had done *that* for him! Eve put on her hat, found Mr. Pradwick's address in the telephone directory and arrived at his house a few minutes before nine.

Mr. Pradwick had dined well; he was smoking a cigar, listening to the radio, when Mrs. Deans was announced. Eve thought he had a kind face. She took heart at once. Benevolent eyes twinkling behind gold-rimmed glasses; a fixed smile over a chubby chin.

"This news about my husband. It can't be true. Surely it can't be true, Mr. Pradwick?"

"I wish it were not true," said Pradwick. "But a deliberate forgery like that cannot be passed over. I had to inform the police at once. It was Mr. Murden's signature that was forged. Unhappily he is too ill to be told. I acted for the firm as a firm. I have no personal animosity against your husband . . . now do, for goodness' sake, Mrs. Deans, leave me alone. Whatever you do, no scenes, please. I can do nothing. The magistrate is sure to grant bail in the morning. No. With the best will in the world I can do nothing—nothing whatever. The matter is out of my hands."

Eve felt stupefied. Desperately she hoped that it would all turn out to be a dream, but it was no dream, and the inevitability of the police court in the morning stood out as an almost unbearable reality. When it came to Burt's turn to appear in the dock, Eve wanted to shout encouragement; to tell him that she was near at hand; that she refused to think of him as anything but the dear, unselfish Burt she had known all these quiet years. But Burt seemed dazed; his eyes stared unseeingly; words sounded in his ears, but had no significance.

"Reluctantly we prosecute," said Mr. Pradwick. His smiling mouth belied the reluctance. It was all so horribly cold, so formal, so inhuman. And there was Burt with a face of utter despair—a strange cog in the machinery of things, without a hope in the world.

Eve heard Burt's whispered reply to the charge: "Not guilty," and then something out of infinity began to pluck at her sleeve. She turned, and was amazed to see Willie. The youth's eyes were shining. "It's all right, mother," he whispered. "See who I have brought with me."

There was conferring, bustling, something unusual happening, and miraculously a dark, shrivelled-up little man, with bent back and unsteady limbs, was in the witness-box.

It was Mr. Murden, up from a bed of sickness, acquainted with the prosecution by prisoner's son. All a mistake, was the portent of Mr. Murden's words. "I signed the cheque myself and gave it to Mr. Deans. Mr. Pradwick acted hastily, but for the best, as he thought. He considered that I was too unwell to be told, but I am here, you see, to prevent an injustice. Certainly I identify the cheque and the signature."

"But why did the fool confess to it when I taxed him?" asked a much-puzzled Pradwick, opening the door of a taxi-cab for Murden.

"Because he did it," came back the harsh, grating voice of the senior partner. "The best of us are liable to slip up, Pradwick. And now, with perjury on my conscience I'm going back to the tender mercies of the surgeons."

### NEXT WEEK

*We must show the world around Britain just as hospitably as we expect to be shown around the world. This tourist industry flourishing in our cities is still an unknown quantity that*

OSCAR E. MILLARD

*has tried to fathom in*

"Showing the World Around."

*Other articles include: "Flying Man's Food," by J. Murray Smith, and "Chip Off the Old Block," by Sophia Lauterbach.*

*Fiction by Frank King, Eric Brand, Stephen Phillips, Francis Beeding and Lucile Silk Edgerton.*

## *Through the Windscreen—by Bougie*

# Does DRIVING give you a PAIN in the NECK?

EVE may have stolen the apple, Adam first thought of motoring and led her into it to share his guilt. Henceforth, she is linked with the underworld; a suspected person. From the moment she takes the wheel and daintily presses the starter, she can never be the same again.

See Robert watching her. He has no eyes now for somnambulent pedestrians, trick cyclists, sleeping carters, and other privileged felons. As a motorist, she is fair game for the Big Shots at the Treasury and the racketeers of the County Councils.

As to the roads, it is obviously cheaper to draw dots and lines and put lighthouses all over the roads we have than to build others that would be more adequate.

The Highway Code does the rest. But what is really needed is a handbook of pilotage, and this is where candidates for the Driving Test are so pathetically led astray. Learning to drive the car is merely the fun of the thing, not to be confused with the grim realities lying ahead.

Psychologists have joined the hunt. For all you know, one of these up-to-date practitioners may turn up in court to denounce you as incurably "accident prone." Perhaps you had failed to spot an important warning sign in total darkness. Yet these are compensations. The explorer within urges us afar, over the hills and the hills beyond, to the rim of the uttermost vale which, we know, is the fairest. It is the farthest from the blare of the bread-winning; from all that we seek to escape in holiday time.

Leaving our cares on the doorstep, with a note to the milkman, we take the road to the top of the world. Even Robert, basking in the sun, can scarce forbear to smile. There are no shadows in Eden, but the serpent lingers to destroy us if he may.

His poison is fatigue, and whether we drive for business or the joy of our journey's end, fatigue is a subtle enemy.

Driving fatigue is not of the satisfying kind that follows hard manual labour. Reacting on brain as well as body, it tends to defeat its own remedy—sleep.

One of the principal causes of driving fatigue is often present before the journey has begun—a lack of complete confidence in the car.

Unaccountable sounds, rhythmical or intermittent, proceeding from mechanism or coachwork, begin to annoy. Vague anxieties hover at the back of the driver's mind. The car is going like a song, yet the omen persists. Nothing happens, but the sinister thing remains, nagging all the time.

One feels, or seems to feel, something odd about the steering. A bias, a lumpiness, stiffness, or wandering. One goes on feeling that something should be done about it. The brakes go soggy just when one needs them most, or a mere touch on the pedal locks the wheels. The engine misfires intermittently; acceleration is erratic, making things awkward in traffic.

None of these things need be disastrous, with care. But that extra care, exerted on the countless occasions that call for it, during a long run, means a waste of the vitality that might be saved for better things. Their remedy comes under the heading of car maintenance, and that is another story. We are on the road now.

Driving position is one of those obvious things likely to be overlooked or underestimated. Round the houses, or on short runs, it does not matter much. You can sit on a packing case, a petrol can, or on nothing at all, and drive a car until aching nature calls a halt.

But if you are going far, it does matter. Racing drivers know all about it. They have to. Lightning decision needs instant response: an arch of the ankle, a flick of the wrist, with no margin for groping and shuffling for lever or pedal. This is driving par excellence: an exceptional nervous system directing a superlative machine. But its technique in driving position is worth notice to all of us. Everything is devised to minimise movement and nervous fatigue.

**Driving position is one of those obvious things likely to be overlooked or underestimated**

A comfortable seat is only the beginning. The art of arriving fresh and friendly at the end of a long day's run is literally to put your back into it. Sit up to the job.

This does not mean anything medieval, like a straight-backed chair with a right-angled bend; though that is better than the other extreme. To go to bed in the driving seat is inelegant, uncomfortable, and unsafe. Holding the wheel at arms length, in a gesture of supplication, gives neither adequate control of the steering nor effective vision. It simply leads to a pain in the neck.

The muscular effort required for steering originates in the back. It is applied by the hands, and the arms are the links. The shorter the links, the better the control. The wheel can be spun to a full lock by linkage, or arm movement, alone, without unsettling the back from the back of the seat, which supports its reaction to the effort. When driving straight ahead the elbows can hang down at the sides, relieving the shoulders. At the scope of the forearms, the lower half of the wheel is in comfortable reach and a course can be held with the play of the wrists.

A great boon is a rest for the right elbow, as is provided by the cut-away portion, alongside the driver, of certain open sports bodies. A rest can be devised inside the front door of a saloon without much difficulty.

Some steering columns are adjustable for rake. This useful provision solves geometrical problems for long-legged drivers in cars with a long reach to the hand levers. Sitting properly to the steering wheel, the feet of a driver of normal proportions will come conveniently to the pedals. The designer has seen to that.

The practice of lifting and lowering the entire leg to work the clutch, the foot-brake, and especially the accelerator is not to be commended. It is tiring and unsteady. The legs are bound to move to some extent, but the pivoting point should be at the heel rather than the hip joint. With the heel firmly bedded on the floor, ankle movement gives a steady and accurate control over the pedals.

The place for a pedal is undoubtedly against the ball of the foot. Some pedals, unfortunately, are high and feet are sometimes small. This difficulty is defeated by the simple ruse of fixing a block on the floorboard to take the heels, raising the balls of the feet to the pads of the pedals. The comfort of this must be tried to be realised.

Now feel for the gear lever. Can you reach it without leaning forward? How many times do you expect to change gear during the day—leaning forward every time? There are two ways out of this.

Move the seat forward until your hand falls automatically on to the knob of the lever. If this is too easy you may be too close to the wheel. In that case, do not move the seat. Put a cushion behind your shoulders. A little ingenuity suggests half a dozen ways of securing this cushion against slipping down. Some seats, of course, can be adjusted for angle as well as for length.

A last word before the start, particularly to the long-legged. If you sit too low, with your knees up, you will be sorry. The bones you sit on, cushioned as they may be, will begin to ache, and ache till you can bear no more. A little solid uplift will save you from this: and stuff a wad into the hollow of your back.

All of this seems much ado; but it costs nothing, and anyway we are off now. How far are we going? Driving to the clock, or taking our time? A wise schedule allows an easy mileage for the first hour. When you start you are not keyed up. Let it come. To force the pace from the word "Go" is hard on yourself and hard on the car. Let each warm to the work. Both will be the better for it.

Drive with anticipation. This gives you a margin for every emergency. The staccato driver, who roars off into each short open space gets no farther than the next traffic block. He wastes fuel, and slamming on his brakes at the last moment gives their linings what they do not deserve. His passengers usually hate it. They cease to regard him as an ace, in the anxious hope that he will learn how to do it as he goes along.

For drivers with an ego that must be expressed there are competitions, giving opportunities of matching their talents against fellow experts. Nevertheless, the really expert driver on the road has a way of getting there without the passengers knowing how. For him there are no emergencies. They are anticipated.

To cultivate anticipation is more than a safeguard. It raises driving to an art, whose fascination never palls. Its interest fills the longest lonely drive.

In motoring, as in matrimony, little things can make or mar. Drawing on the handbrake as you top the final hill, look down upon the valley of your choice. The miles behind have taken nothing: given you instead, the luxury of hunger and of thirst. The remedy for these is now awaiting you below, at the sign of the—well, what is in a name?


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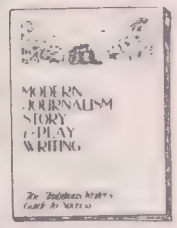


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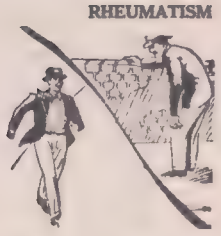

GONE

HEADACHE

GONE

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INSOMNIA

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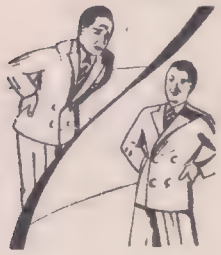

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## TESTIMONY

For a little over three months I have been laid up with Rheumatism. The pain in my back, legs and shoulders has been severe. I am 78 years old and until the last few weeks have enjoyed perfect health, all my friends have been surprised at my agility, and even now apart from the Rheumatism I am very well. I think it is only just to say that I am under Osteopathic treatment. Every week I undergo severe bodily massaging, but although I have had eight treatments, the pain is not less, but even more severe. Now I was persuaded by a friend to try your powders, which you were good enough to send, and about two hours after taking the first powder the relief was remarkable. I at once ordered a 1s. 3d. packet from Boots. I have not taken any for a week until this afternoon, when my pain was severe. Now I am feeling better already.—Yours sincerely, T. P———, Walsall.

We have used Renipas Powders now for several years and have derived great benefit from their use. My husband has suffered considerably with Rheumatism at different times and always resorts to the powders when he feels an attack about, which seldom happens since taking your remedy. My trouble was severe sick headaches which have almost ceased now, and I get instant relief from Renipas and am never without a supply. My friend suffers in the same way, so am asking you to kindly send her a sample (address enclosed) as we are anxious for her to try them.—Yours truly, Mrs. M. H. L———, Hastings.

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# WHEN the BOAT SANK

## *True Life Stories*

Ten guineas for *your* True Life Story if you write it yourself in printable form; two guineas if you send us only a summary. That is "Passing Show's" invitation to readers, made because we believe in the old saying that "Truth is Stranger than Fiction."

ALTHOUGH the events of which I write happened less than twelve months ago, they already seem to belong to a long-distant nightmare. I had better start at the beginning, though, which was somewhere around the spring of 1933.

My wife and I were in charge of a prosperous guest house in Surrey, and had been for some little time—five years, in fact. As a job, it was good; there could be no question about that. The money was good, the owners were charming people to work for and the constantly changing visitors themselves were interesting. But in spite of all this there always seemed to be just a little something short. It was not *our* guest house. We were, after all, only devoting all our energies to making money for someone else and to building up a business for someone's benefit other than ourselves.

Like many others, we were both bitten by the independence bug. It became a magic word for us both; more so to me, perhaps, than to my wife, who is gifted with a large amount of cautiousness. We argued the pros and cons for a long time before deciding to take the plunge and start something on our own. My wife was for waiting a little longer—another year or so—but I am a trifle impetuous, and nothing else would satisfy me but that we took the plunge there and then.

We rented a rambling old house with a tea garden in Devon. The day we chose to go down to see the place was glorious, and to us, at any rate, it looked like paradise. The house was tucked away in a little cove at the end of a sheltered valley, and the sea came right up to the garden wall.

The large town on which we were going to rely for our custom was some three miles away over the cliffs, and there was a good bus service in the summer, we were informed. There seemed to be no competition, for with the exception of a tiny tea-shop in the village the other houses in the vicinity seemed to belong to retired wealthy people.

My wife and I congratulated ourselves, and we were installed in the house by the middle of May. There were lots of things to be done before the commencement of the "season" which the landlord informed us was around Whitsun. The place needed thoroughly spring cleaning, and we set to with a will. The rent, there was no doubt about it, was unduly high, and it was payable in advance; but we were so full of optimism that this seemed a mere trifle. We were "independent," that was the great thing.

But we received a shock the week before Whitsun. Almost without exception, the houses that looked so "country gentleman" and the beautifully laid-out gardens in the village blossomed forth as tea-rooms and tea gardens. It was almost incredible to us that there could be so many in the one place. The combined seating accommodation would have sufficed for a small army.

The one consoling fact to which we clung was that ours was the only place actually on the beach, but even here we were doomed to disappointment. Two cottages on the opposite side of the cove were transformed into tea gardens a few days later. The landlord had omitted to mention this small fact when we took the place.

We tried to cheer each other by saying: "Ah well, never mind; the rent is paid until November." But it did not have much effect. Naturally, it rained that first Whitsun, and the takings for our first week were something short of five pounds.

In our first burst of enthusiasm we had spent pounds on decorating, and on the numerous small oddments that were really the landlord's liability; these we began to regret. After Whitsun, though, things began to brighten up; a little money began to trickle in and a few paying guests came along. I turned the shed alongside the house into a shop of sorts, and dispensed ices and cold drinks to a hot public. But in spite of a swelling turnover, the bank balance did not show much tendency to rise in proportion.

Then, suddenly, in what seemed to be the most hectic period of the whole season, everything quietened down. One week we took our biggest sum of the season, and next—well, it was quartered, and within a fortnight everything had closed down. All the gay umbrellas were folded up for another nine months, and a horde of tradesmen descended on us with colossal bills. The Devonshire "season" had finished.

Another disappointment. Still, we paid the tradesmen and the wholesalers who had stocked the "shop," set aside the rent for the next six months and hoped for the best.

The total remaining from a turnover of four hundred and fifty pounds was forty. This sum had to keep us until the commencement of the next season.

Forty pounds is not a large sum to keep two people for nine months, even in the country. "I'll get a job," I told my wife. But it was easier said than done and when the spring came I had not earned a penny piece.

The rent came due again in May, but as our assets were six pounds and a few odd coppers, I wrote to the landlord and asked for an extension of the period of grace till the end of June. Fortunately, he was willing to agree to this, and we breathed again.

That year we really decided to concentrate on taking every penny we could lay hands on, and things certainly seemed to go with a swing. By the end of the season we had taken to the bank nearly seven hundred and fifty pounds, and felt really pleased. But the extra outlay on equipment, and the extra help, and the correspondingly larger bills to pay left us with exactly thirty-three pounds on which to live the winter. It was a tragedy. We had lost all our original savings, and our hard work had been in vain.

I hunted and wrote around for job after job, but to no purpose, and then at Christmas a terrific gale lifted the roof. The landlord, whose responsibility this was, had the repairs done in a "penny-wise" fashion, and in consequence the roof leaked. In short, we were thoroughly miserable.

"There was that ship again. Why couldn't the thing go away and leave me in peace?"

By the spring of last year we were reduced to pinching and scraping in a desperate attempt to hold out until the season started, when like a bombshell a letter came from the landlord pointing out that our agreement expired in May, and in view of the repairs to the roof the rent would be almost half as much again for the following term. Moreover, it must be forthcoming on the day it became due this time.

My wife wept. We knew nobody from whom we could borrow money, and the outlook was as black as it possibly could be. It seemed natural to think of putting an end to my troubles. Why bother about other people?

I pondered on how to accomplish this with the least discomfort. I knew from experience how easy it is to swim until exhaustion makes one feel that nothing matters any more and the sea at my door was a constant temptation.

It was in this frame of mind that I set out one day in my small boat. I told my wife that I was going fishing, and took my lines along. It was a warm sunny day, and the sea was heaving gently with a long ground swell as I pulled out of the cove. I rowed out much farther than my usual fishing spot, right out into the full run of the tide, and then idled on the oars.

Why not now, I thought? The tide would prevent my getting back to the land even if I could have swum that distance, and it would look like an accident to the people on shore when I was washed up. The only remorse I felt was for my wife, and somehow even she seemed a very long way off from this distance out at sea.

I pulled the plug out of the boat first, and watched her slowly fill; it took a long time, but finally the water reached the level of the gunwale, and I kicked off my boots and removed my coat. The rest of my clothes I kept on. It wouldn't really make a lot of difference.

I stood up on a submerged thwart and looked around. Far away off a large white steamer was heading up the Channel. I shouldn't get within miles of it, but that was what I wanted—just an objective to head for.

I plunged, and found the water was colder than I had expected. When I came to the surface I looked round for the boat, but my plunge had sent it below. There could be no going back now. I swam out towards the white ship coming up Channel.

I seemed to have been in the water for hours, and was still heading for the ship; my steady stroke was not really tiring, but I was terribly cold.

The white boat was getting extraordinarily close, I fancied. I trod water for a few moments, and watched. No doubt of it, she had altered course and was headed in my direction; it was not long before I could hear the soughing and crunching of her bows as she rose on the swell and the throb of her engines drummed in my ears across the water.

I felt a bit lightheaded and I think I started to weep. It seemed a very pleasant world that I was leaving behind, after all. If only I could get out of this freezing water! There was that ship again—why couldn't the thing go away and leave me in peace instead of dithering about all over the place like that? It was falling to pieces; I saw a great chunk of it come away from the side and float away from the main bulk.

The throbbing had stopped. I wondered vaguely if the ship was sinking, too, like me. I was swallowing a lot of water now, and the piece that had fallen from the side of the ship was coming at me with a rush. It was coming on top of me; there were black things like me in it. Never mind, this was the end . . .

I came to in the sick bay of the white steamer, which turned out to be a banana boat bound for Bristol. "He's coming round," said a voice, and I looked around with wide eyes at the little crowd round the bed. They slowly melted away, leaving just one man with me.

He looked familiar, and I tried to place him. Why, of course, it was Mr. B———, Pa B———, who had always been such a good sport when he was on holiday in Surrey. He must be a passenger on the boat.

When he spoke there was a twinkle in his eye. "Feelin' better? Y'now, next time you jump, you must see that there are no ships in the vicinity first."

"How did you know?" I asked him.

"Well, in the first place," he answered, "we saw you from the boat. Captain has a mighty good pair of glasses, and in the second place you told us. Just before you came to. Now, what about giving me the full story?"

Well, I did, and the result is that the ownership of our cottage changed hands, and our rent is negligible now, and I have a job—a good job in the firm of which Mr. B——— is the head.

We have lost our independence, maybe; but found something far better—security.

## *Note of Warning!*

IT is wise to remember that on holiday the risk of accidents is greatly increased. That is why THE PASSING SHOW sounds a note of warning. When bathing in the sea, beware of currents and tides; of the shelving beach; of the beach where the rocks may be covered at high tide. Above all, beware of going on holiday without securing the protection of THE PASSING SHOW Free Family Insurance

Thirty-seven benefits are incorporated in this great Free Insurance, including protection against sports accidents, home accidents, rail, sea, and air travel accidents, children's accidents, accidents while boating and bathing, special additional protection for widows, and educational grants.

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TRISTAM SHANDY said, "When a man is hemm'd in by two indecorums, and must commit one of 'em, let him chuse which he will, the world will blame him." And that is how we feel about the torrent of abuse that has poured into our kennel since we modestly helped one of our correspondents to tell the truth about the horrors of camping.

The tide of letters has risen until even our thoughts are awash on an ocean of pretty sentiments on the joys of living the simple life; of crawling stiff and cold from a saturated tent into a world dissolved in rain; of struggling mightily in a midnight storm to prevent the tent from sailing across the meadow into a duck-pond; of the flies that tickle your nose just as you realise that the handle of the coffee-pot is going to burn the right hand unless the left hand leaves the bacon to the mercy of the flames to come to its assistance; and of the hundred-and-one pleasant thrills that make the strong, silent people of the woods think they are getting a kick out of life.

UNFORTUNATELY, once they start telling you of the delights of this spartan hobby, they forget that they are strong and silent; they babble like the brooks on whose banks they make such a mess; the torrent of their eloquence pours over us with such force that we are beginning to feel we may safely claim to have been established before the Flood. Listen, for instance, to the withering scorn pouring from the lips of Mr. W. H. T. Nibbs, as he describes his emotions on reading the letter that caused all this schemozzle.

"As I read the letter I became conscious that my emotions were undergoing a subtle change," says His Nibbs, with the melodramatic effect worthy of an Edgar Wallace avenger telling the villain that all is over save the charges of fraud. "I found waves of scorn surging over me, and, as I finished the letter in grim silence, I wondered at the apparent spinelessness of the modern city-dweller. I wondered how a man, healthy and fit enough to undertake the grand adventure of a camping holiday, could be materialistic enough to allow such trivialities as tired cows, cold feet and cold bacon (not to mention collapsible beds and tents and inclement weather) to discount the numerous joys of the finest holiday obtainable. I glory in the struggle to light a fire in the misty dawn and no meal tastes as good as the one patiently wrested from reluctant Nature, with the birds singing their congratulations in the tree tops. . . . Who could not find joy in adventuring forth to explore unknown territory, spending a glorious day in the open to return to a light supper (I always remember to find some milk during the day) and to a deep, healthy slumber in a blanket laid on Mother Earth (no collapsible beds for me)?"

One or two skunks hanging around

FOR OURSELF, we may say that our daily struggle to wrest food from reluctant Nature disguised as a female ogre in a local chop-house does not inspire us to try the same sort of thing in our moments of leisure merely in the hope that some angry jackdaws will applaud. Still, it's good to hear from these grim stalwarts, who are not only brave enough to go out into the silent places to set up their tiny canvas homes in defiance of the elements, the insects, the bulls and the bailiffs, but also have the nerve to stand up in the market place to defend their eccentricities. They obviously come from camping sites where men are men and, to judge by letters from the females of their species, the women are proud of it.

Even though we wear the "wrinkled gear of age," we feel we are puling and tacky fellows when these fairies of the camp fire level their daintily varnished finger-nails at our bald pates to tell us what shuffling, shambling specimens we are to even think of being honest about the joys of living in the same tent as a mosquito. And as we perambulate gently through life these days, we are inspired to enjoy the gentle luxuries so dear to our old bones by the thought of vigorous young men and women in short trousers showing, by their great love of camping, that the indomitable spirit of this mighty race still lives on bacon and eggs and baked beans burned on a camp fire.

BEFORE OUR CORRESPONDENTS take to hurling missiles instead of missives because of our obstinacy in this matter, we suggest that they hear the word of Mrs. L. G. Simple, who has something to say from Okema Beach, Christopher Lake, Sask., Canada, of the romance of the Great North-West.

"Out here in the bush," she says, "we are entertaining our annual visitors, the mosquitoes, who are particularly numerous this year. They are nice little things, so fond of home life, always fighting around the doors and windows, and when they do get in they make straight for baby and nibble at him till he screams. When we go bathing we have to meet the bull-flies and the deer-flies and all the other flies living in these parts, waiting to chew great pieces out of our arms and legs.

"Then there are usually one or two skunks hanging around always ready to show their anger in a most drastic manner. But for real romance you must visit this country in winter, when the temperature goes down to anything between forty or fifty below zero. If you put your nose outside the door it freezes. My husband often comes home from a trip with his face the colour of a rotten banana. But he doesn't mind. He likes the country, and as he's so funny to look at anyway it's not unbecoming.

"Think how romantic it is to be a pilot freighting into the north-west territories, getting lost in blizzards and having to land where there is nought but ice for hundreds of miles.

It must be romantic, because when a pilot friend of mine told a fair lady from home that he was forced down in a blizzard on an unknown lake and had to live on eggs and onions for two days while he waited for the weather to clear, she said, 'Oh, but how romantic!'"

AND THAT, FOR THE BENEFIT of these tough, camping correspondents, is Mrs. Simple's low-down on the simple life of the Silent Places; let them read it in the wood smoke at twilight when they hear the birch log burning. They'll need something to take their minds off the flies that are using their ankles as feeding grounds.

BY THE WAY, we always thought John Bright was dead. But he has written to us from Carlisle to say that after a week-end's enforced attendance at a church conference in Scotland he is astounded that "men who know so little of this world should know so much of the next."

We seem to have heard that before, and we hate to think of the old man's ghost slipping into Carlisle to post a postcard that he left absent-mindedly in his overcoat pocket half a century or so ago. As we've recently bought a new book of quotations to press flowers in we are hoping this horrid habit of recalling their *bon mots* doesn't spread to other famous ghosts. Anyway, where could we send the half-guinea?

CONVERSATION Piece by Morley Whymper. First farmer: "This rain'll soon be bringing things out of the ground, Garge."

Second ditto: "I hopes not; my old woman has been down there only six months."

**Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed. Address: "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 31 Bow Street, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs. or Miss.**

# Solution Next Week

CLUES DOWN

1. A wooden slip.
2. Call to arms possibly.
3. Met Iarn man (anagram).
4. Receptacle or vess in turn.
5. Half 33.
6. Ice toner for building.
7. Frothy talk.
8. His legs are vehicles.
9. To suppose in pedantic style.
10. Vocal effort following 5 for prescribed practice.
12. Ecclesiastical passage.
15. This cannot be difficult.
16. So did Topsy.
18. A human frailty.
21. Sued for past employment.
24. Has qualities of an alloy.
27. Airs may accompany them.
28. Submits to or inflicts attrition.
29. Extent from wrath.
31. Meals sadly upset.
33. Something accomplished.
34. Liquid creep.
37. May be edible or coloured.
38. Rice liquor.
40. Aqueous absence.

CLUES ACROSS

1. Half better than none.
4. Not in doubt.
11. He divagates from the truth.
13. Not written.
14. Rending.
17. Scarcely friends.
19. Does injury.
20. Something of an upset in the vernacular.
22. Nothing less than this.
23. Colour of 37.
24. They curb your activity (hidden).
25. You will find I am in 31.
26. Measure of gravity.
28. Opening pronoun of 26.
30. Rearwards adjective.
32. And sage for programmes.
35. The chemist would take the sodium out of the narrative (abbreviation).
36. They live in high latitudes.
39. Made reparation.
41. A misdemeanour in this land.
42. Someone not at home here.
43. Take the wood.
44. Suffering from somnolence.
45. Remarks in 13 fashion.

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| M | E | A | L | S | ■ | E | A | G | R | E | S | ■ | U | ■ |
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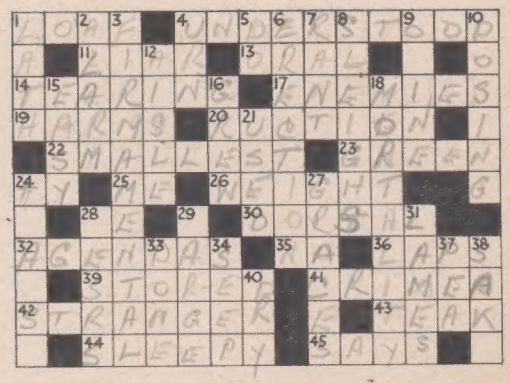
*Solution of last week's puzzle*



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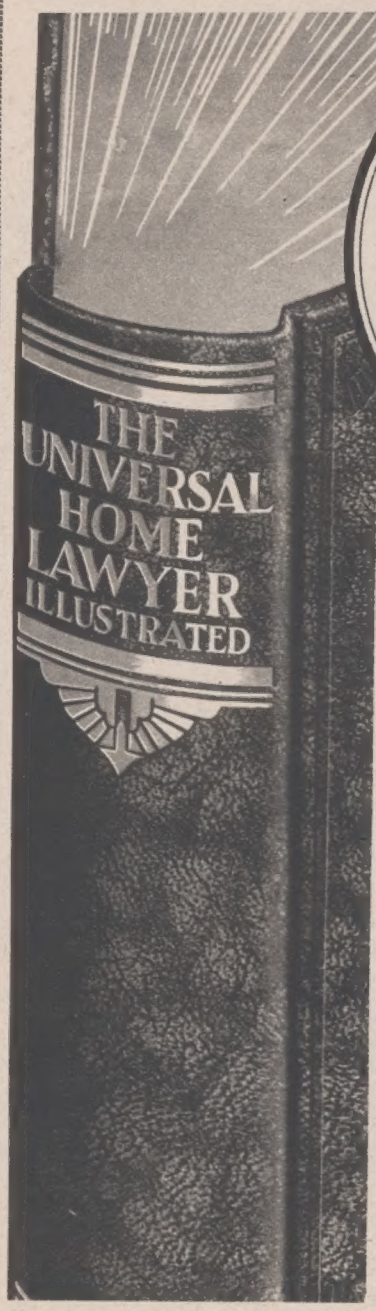


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